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THE MODERN NEWSPAPER

THE MODERN NEWSPAPER

By NANCY BARR MAVITY
OAKLAND TRIBUNE, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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PRINTED IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

MY SON JOHN

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The author acknowledges with thanks the courtesy of the United Press Association in permitting quotation from the *United Press Manual,* and the invaluable store of information contained in the files of *Editor and Publisher,* to which the author is indebted far beyond the limits indicated by direct quotation.

PREFACE

This book is written about real newspaper work by an active newspaper worker, in the belief that a concrete understanding of the actual requirements and standards of the modern newspaper provides a more useful preparation both for newspaper writers and for the larger group who, though they may not become writers, will still be newspaper readers, than an arbitrary limitation of the material to the scope of the student paper can afford.

Editors are in enthusiastic agreement with teachers in placing the ban on a " vocational " course. By this time the fallacy that the graduate of a course in journalism is a trained and experienced reporter has been thoroughly discredited. But in seeking to avoid the stigma of " vocational " treatment, there is sometimes a tendency to restrict all consideration of problems and content to those which are applicable to the amateur paper — and this attitude is even more narrowly vocational.

Emphasis on the amateur paper, with omission of topics outside its scope, results in a course which is necessarily useless after graduation. Such a course, limited to an amateur activity which ends with the four years of school or college life, is not a part of that education which, to be worthy of the name, must extend through life. In its practical results, this sharply drawn line between the amateur and the commercial newspaper gives a narrowness of background which leads many editors to dismiss training on a student paper as worthless.

It should not be so dismissed, because it gives at the very least an initiation into the rudiments of the craft. To recognize the difference between the school journal and the city newspaper is obviously necessary. But the danger for the student lies in mistaking a small portion of the field for the whole field because he has not learned much about any other. The school or college paper, in reality, is analogous to the trade paper, with its own special scope and function. In fearing to trespass on the ground of vocational training, the course which emphasizes the needs of the student paper loses the value of the realistic approach. This approach, by taking for its subject matter the real newspaper in its entirety, does not place the requirements of the student paper against a background of nothing at all, but relates them to the larger world of which the student and his student activities are a part.

To select and apply the material of such a course to the special conditions of the student publication is easy. It is largely a matter of omission. To know more than they can use is not a handicap to the student editors — on the contrary, it is a fairly good recipe for competence in any undertaking. Such a treatment, moreover, so far from being vocational in the discredited sense, takes into account the training of those who will not be professional writers but who will profit by learning to become intelligent and understanding readers. For this reason, to take two examples, a discussion of crime news is not omitted from the present book merely because student publications have no occasion to publish crime stories; and the treatment of newspaper ethics is not confined to the quoting of moral maxims but takes up practical questions of policy and conduct.

This, it need hardly be argued, is the attitude adopted in other departments of study. Not every member of a class in chemistry expects to become a professional chemist; still less does he have the idea that he is adequately prepared for a career in chemistry after concluding one semester of study. Nevertheless, what he studies is real chemistry, and the course introduces him to the scientific outlook and method from the start. It is not limited to such portions of chemistry as he may use in an amateur chemistry club. Similarly, the plays studied in English classes are not selected for their suitability for amateur presentation.

Yet the bugaboo of vocationalism has had somewhat this effect on many courses in journalism. Because that bugaboo has long ago lost all legitimate power to terrify, this book is concerned with real newspapers, real reporters and their work, in the belief that only by this means can it be of sound educative value to the student, and in the hope that the newspaper reader as well as the future newspaper writer will find it useful as an introductory survey of a subject which closely affects the life of every literate adult.

N. B. M.

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Part One

THE MODERN NEWSPAPER

I

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

It is unlikely that any one has enrolled for this course without some idea that it will be useful to him. That is, in fact, the only reason for studying anything; for there is no such thing as useless knowledge. Some subjects are useful because they enrich the color and enjoyment of life, others because they give us a better understanding of the world we live in. Some forms of knowledge satisfy a particular individual need set by the pattern of personality — the mathematician thrills to the exact logic of mathematics quite apart from its applications, and the chess player derives keen delight from the setting and solving of problems on the board.

The narrowest definition of useful knowledge is that it shall help us in earning a living or in choosing the occupation by which that living shall be earned. Most of us will spend the greater part of our adult waking hours in work of some sort, to provide the material means whereby we live. It is therefore important that we know something in advance of the real character of any occupation we are thinking of choosing; for the most fortunate man or woman is not the one who makes the most money or wins the widest fame, but the one whose daily work is a joy and by reason of that enjoyment has in itself some of the zest of play.

Most of the students in this class probably have the idea that they would like to choose newspaper work as an occupation. There is a certain glamour about professional

writing which often conceals its elements of drudgery. There is also an excitement in feeling oneself at the center of events, behind the scenes, perhaps even pulling the strings. Probably no student in his dreams sees himself as a mere rewrite man or a reporter collecting the names of entrants at a dairy show — he sees himself as a foreign correspondent or at the very least a "star" reporter. And these dreams are legitimate, provided they are based on a sound knowledge of the reality. In the light of such knowledge they may still seem reasonable goals — or they may appear to be personally unattainable, even no longer desirable, when tested by a clear understanding of actual conditions.

A preliminary view of what newspaper work involves may turn away many who decide in the light of the facts that they are not fitted to follow it or do not wish to do so. Such a result will not be a waste of time. On the contrary, it will save much precious wasted effort ending in futility or disappointment, perhaps when it is too late to make change easy. There will be others who, with a clear view of the long apprenticeship which still lies before them, will be reinforced in their resolve to choose newspaper work as an occupation. They will know something of what lies before them. They will probably conclude that it is neither so black as, by immemorial convention, its practitioners paint it, nor so bright as many outsiders imagine. The final choice will be reached according to the terms of Lincoln's classic remark: "For people who like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they like."

The word "journalism" has hitherto, with some difficulty, been studiously avoided. It is not used in America outside of text books. The man or woman in newspaper work in this country never calls himself a journalist, nor does he ever speak of the "newspaper game." A desire

to avoid any suggestion of superciliousness has doubtless led to his dislike of the former term. Nevertheless, because it is a convenient word, less clumsy than "newspaper worker" and less limited than "reporter," it will be used in the following pages, always with the understanding that it is flanked by mental quotation marks.

The psychological objection to the phrase "newspaper game" is less obvious. Perhaps it smacked too much of the amateur; perhaps too many outsiders began to use it; perhaps it implied a frivolous attitude toward a serious job. At any rate, it is now as dead as the traditional "30"—a form of closing that flourished in the time of the old hand telegraph, but in these days when telegraphic reports are mechanically transcribed directly upon the typewriter has been replaced in dispatches by the tame "Good night."

There is a curious tendency in modern America to imagine that an occupation is dignified or exalted if it is arbitrarily "lifted" to the rank of a profession. The word "profession" is a term of exact description, not of praise or compliment. Yet real estate dealers, advertising agents, funeral directors, barbers, and members of numerous other respectworthy callings seem to hold the delusion that some subtle change has taken place in their occupations by the mere verbal device of calling them professions.

This is a form of rather absurd occupational snobbery. Nothing is gained for an honorable trade or business by labeling it a profession; the language merely loses a useful distinction, and the occupation in question seems to suffer from an inferiority complex when it insists on relinquishing its own honorable designation, proper to a self-respecting trade or craft.

Journalism has not been guiltless of this false self-glorification, based on the erroneous idea that a vocation becomes more honorable, more worthy of strict standards

and of the worker's best efforts if it is called a profession. Nevertheless, newspaper work is not a profession. It is one of several other things that are just as good.

It is not a profession because no prescribed course of professional study is demanded before it may be practiced, such as is required for the practice of law, medicine, or, in most denominations, the ministry. It is furthermore not regulated by a self-governing body which has the power to expel those condemned by it. The Bar Association has this power to try and to disbar lawyers. The state medical boards can revoke the licenses of physicians. Ecclesiastical bodies can unfrock ministers and priests in their respective denominations. But no organized body of his confrères can declare that a newspaper owner shall no longer be allowed to publish a newspaper; and nothing except inability to hold a job disqualifies a newspaper reporter.

Journalism further differs from the professions in that most persons engaged in it are direct employees of an individual employer. Unlike the doctor, the lawyer, or the minister, their success does not depend on their ability to satisfy clients, patients, or parishioners. Their service is only indirectly to the outside public and directly to the owner who employs them, or to his representatives.

If journalism thus differs from the professions, it also differs from the trades or crafts. It is less mechanical, and more scope is given to individual variation. There is only one correct way to run a machine or to repair a broken engine; but two men may write the same news story, write it altogether differently, and yet write it equally well. Unlike the industrial worker, the newspaper writer has a creative power over the shaping of his material, and therefore has a direct personal relation to the quality of the finished product. The newspaper owner, on the other hand, is more

closely allied to the manufacturer or other business employer than to the professional man.

Newspaper work is thus somewhat of a hybrid. To the owner it is a business enterprise. To the working journalist — and this, of course, includes the great majority of newspaper men and women — it may perhaps be most closely described as an applied art, bearing somewhat the same relation to the independently creative writing of novel, play or poem as illustrating or commercial art bears to painting. Being employees, newspaper writers are not wholly free to choose their ideas and to express them according to their own fancy. Yet the scope allowed them and the recognition given to individual ability place their work in the realm of the arts rather than of the crafts or of the professions. Perhaps this is why the typical newspaper man has a good many of the stigmata associated with the "artistic temperament."

The value of a course in newspaper writing is by no means limited to those who will eventually work in newspaper offices. The time has passed when any wise critic will use the phrase "newspaper English" as a term of reproach. Newspaper English is exacting in its standards. It must be clear, concise, simple, and must keep its "eye on the object." These are qualities of good writing everywhere, but a lapse from them is more glaring and more readily detected in the newspaper story than in forms of writing subjected to less immediate criticism.

There are very few walks of life in which the ability to stick to the point, to choose a concrete rather than an abstract presentation of an idea, to make a point logically and convincingly, to simplify a complex subject so that it is made clear to one less well informed than the writer, to express one's meaning briefly, exactly, and vividly is not a useful accomplishment.

These qualities of style can be appreciated and attained through a course in news writing. Such a course, moreover, gives a point and purpose to the student's exercises in English composition. It gives him something to write for and something to write about. And this objective, in turn, is placed in direct relation to the real world outside himself and outside the classroom — a world of which he is already a part.

This world, for our present purpose, is the world as it is reflected in the daily newspaper — the largest "mirror held up to nature" on which we are likely to gaze. The newspaper is the direct and immediate source of our knowledge of history in the making. It is the most powerful moulding force at work on our living, changing language. In it we hear the footsteps of humanity on the march. In it we may see "why we behave like human beings" — or sometimes why we do not. In it appear human tragedies, comedies, and follies.

For some of these, particularly for the follies, the reader cannot shirk his share of responsibility. In a sense, as will be explained later, the reader is the ultimate creator of what he reads. At any rate, although comparatively few students may become newspaper writers, practically all will be and should be newspaper readers. William S. Gray, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Chicago, in a study of "The Reading Habits and Interests of Adults," estimates that ninety-five per cent of the adult population read the newspapers, as compared with seventy five per cent who read magazines and fifty per cent who read books. Naturally, the educated person reads all three; but he will be a better educated person if he not only reads the newspapers but, by understanding something of the conditions which shape them and make them what they are, is able to read discriminatingly and criticize intelligently.

The material of the present course is therefore two-fold. It is concerned with the newspaper as an institution, its structure and its relations to the public, and also with the practical problems of newspaper writing. These two aspects of the subject, however, are so closely related as to be inseparable, whether the point of view be that of the newspaper writer or of the newspaper reader. The average newspaper reader, even when he essays to qualify as a critic of the press, is astonishingly ignorant and holds a great number of delusions regarding the methods governing the gathering, writing, selecting, and publishing of news. The newspaper will be more interesting to read, and certainly can be more sensibly criticized, by readers who have some acquaintance with the inside workings of the complex newspaper machine.

From the point of view of the writer, it should be obvious that the reporter will be a mere hack, and an unsuccessful one at that, if he knows nothing about the general scheme and purpose of the institution which he serves. If his vision is limited to the carrying out of his daily assignment, he is like the unskilled laborer in a factory who performs a single monotonous and fragmentary task without relating it to the whole of which his work is a part. The newspaper worker's occupation is so far from being of this restricted and mechanical nature that a general knowledge of the structure and functions of the newspaper and its relation to the public is a very practical and essential part of his equipment.

EXERCISES

1. Why did you wish to take this course? Analyze your motives as frankly and accurately as you can. Keep the paper, and at the end of the term note down any changes in your conception of newspaper work and what effect they may have on your original motive.

2. Get a large size notebook to use as a scrap book. Look up two different papers of the same date which handle the same story, and note differences. Which story do you prefer? Why? Paste the stories in your scrap book.

3. Were any of the words used in this chapter unfamiliar to you? If so, underline them, look them up, and add them to your vocabulary. Do the same for succeeding chapters, and for other books which you may read. Keep the list in the back pages of your notebook.

4. List several occupations or circumstances outside newspaper work in which the qualities developed from a study of newspaper writing might be useful.

5. The newspaper was called "the most powerful moulding force at work on our changing language." Can you suggest some words which newspaper use has introduced? Some other words, not yet admitted to standard usage, which newspaper repetition may eventually standardize?

6. What do you think might be gained by insisting that journalism should be called a profession? Make out as good a case as you can against the contentions of the text.

7. Clip for your scrap book (not necessarily all from one issue) examples of (1) tragedy, (2) comedy, (3) folly recorded in the newspaper.

8. What were some of the earlier equivalents of the modern newspaper? How did the Saxons get the news of the landing of William the Conqueror? How was the news of the Boston Tea Party carried to New York? To England? (Consult the history department if necessary.)

9. Notice the date line at the head of a current news dispatch from London, from China, from a city in the United States at a distance from your own. By what means was the news carried? Do you see why modern news reports of distant happenings are more reliable as well as more rapidly transmitted than in former times?

II

THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

The newspaper is at once a business enterprise and a social institution. These two aspects are so often confused that though they are necessarily intertwined it is useful to dissociate them for clearness of discussion.

In emphasizing the aspect of the press as a form of public service — an aspect which in greater or less degree applies to every other legitimate commercial undertaking — it is often ignored in discussion, though not in practice, that as a business enterprise every newspaper is controlled by its owner for the primary purpose of financial profit. Its secondary purpose may be power or prestige or the promotion of a cause, but an unprofitable newspaper does not long continue to serve these ends for its owner.

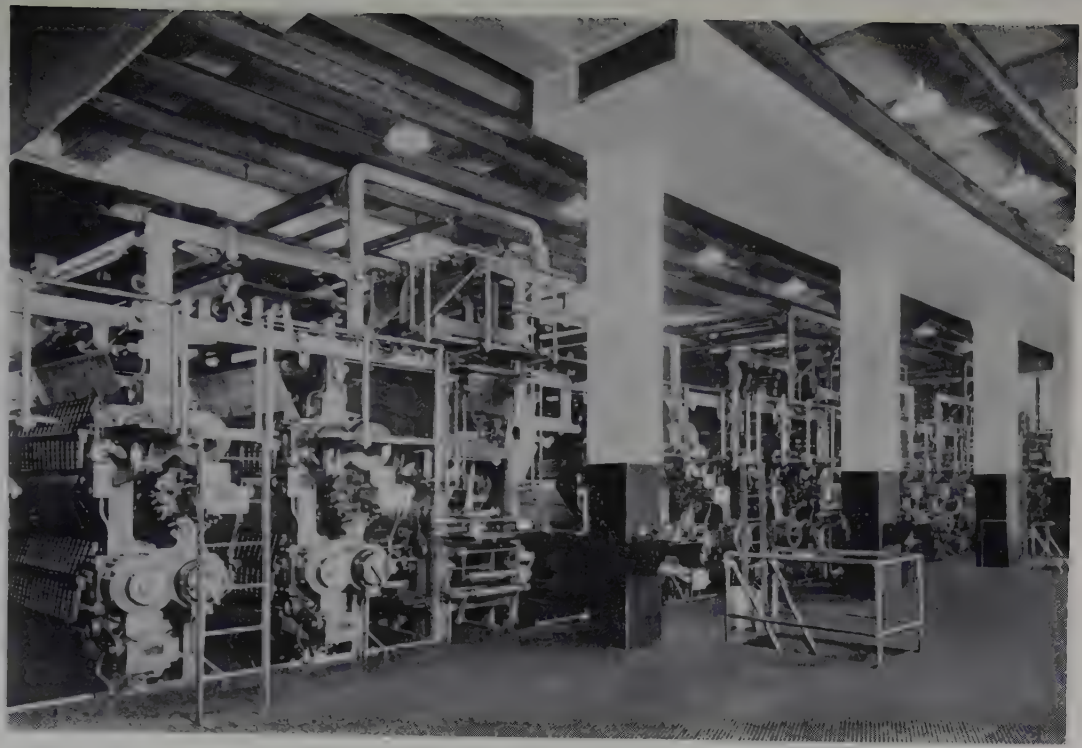
No newspaper, no matter how high minded in policy it may be or how distinguished in literary tone, can continue in existence indefinitely if it fails to make money. As a human institution, and as a financial project as well, its existence is ultimately dependent on its readers. If a sufficient number of readers do not find it to their taste and buy it, it cannot survive. There is thus a profound truth in the slogan of one of the most successful of American newspaper owners: " There is no substitute for circulation."

To be sure, the influence of a newspaper is not always in direct ratio to its circulation as expressed in figures. The character or quality of the circulation is also a factor to be considered. If the paper appeals to thoughtful readers or

to those who take an active part in public affairs, its influence may be greater than that of a paper of larger numerical circulation which does not make this appeal. Similarly, if it circulates mostly among the affluent, its value as an advertising medium may be greater than that of a paper with a larger number of readers whose purchasing power is low. Nevertheless, these comparisons are relative. With a sufficient number of readers, a paper is sure to have some influence, and if its readers are "fit, though few," a point will be reached where quality no longer compensates for lack of numbers.

The final control of the newspaper rests with its readers, even though the price of the paper which you buy on the street or which is delivered to your home does not cover the cost of the blank sheets on which it is printed. The enormous cost of equipment, overhead, wages and salaries, running into thousands of dollars a day, is paid from the revenue derived from advertisements. For this reason it is sometimes falsely assumed that the advertisers control the newspaper. But the advertiser is willing to pay his hundreds or thousands of dollars for a page of space in the newspaper only because by that means he expects to reach with his message a sufficiently large number of readers to make his advertising profitable in results. A page is not merely so many square inches of blank paper with a fixed value. The newspaper wins its advertisers on the number and to a certain degree on the quality of its circulation. For this reason, advertising rates vary in direct ratio to the circulation of the paper.

The quality and amount of advertising does not, on the other hand, determine the circulation price. The reader buys the news and receives the advertisements gratis. But the paper with a large circulation is certain to get and hold the profitable advertising on which its financial solvency



The Chicago Daily News Press-room

depends. Therefore no paper is run directly and primarily to please its advertisers, even though they pay the money which makes it a profitable enterprise. It is run primarily to please its readers; for without readers the page of newsprint is worth, not hundreds or thousands of dollars, but only a few cents. The relation between reader and advertiser reduces to a very simple series of equations: no readers, no advertisements; no advertisements, no profit; no profit, no newspaper.

The importance of the newspaper has long been recognized as more than commercial. A newspaper, like other commodities, is manufactured, bought, and sold. But its traffic is in something more important than any other merchandise. It is a traffic in words, and through words, in ideas. Ideas are of greater importance to mankind — literally more potent for life and death — than the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the houses we live in. Ideas are behind every material improvement in human conditions, from the discovery of the use of fire to the cheapness of the modern automobile. Ideas are behind every disaster except the comparatively few that are due to such purely natural agencies as flood and earthquake. Some modern historians have placed the primary responsibility for the Spanish-American war on the shoulders of a single newspaper owner. Like all extremely simple explanations of complicated events, this is doubtless not entirely true. But it is true that without the support of the press no modern war could win that support of the people, without which it cannot be carried on.

The responsibility of the press to the public, therefore, cannot be exaggerated. As the chief source of our immediate information about all that goes on in the world beyond our direct observation, the press is rightly held accountable to society for a high standard of truthfulness and reliability.

Its responsibility goes even further. In the eighteenth century it was said: "If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." Today it might more accurately be said: "If a man were permitted to control the news, he need not care who makes the laws." Fortunately no man or group of men all holding the same set of opinions has that power. Yet it is true that the newspapers not only present a record of events but that the news thus published constitutes an implicit comment or criticism of contemporary society.

Laws which are unjustifiably harsh or sometimes merely foolish are brought to public attention with resulting public indignation or ridicule by the publication of individual cases in the press. Without the publicity given to their effects these laws might long remain on the statute books without the greater part of the public being any the wiser. On the other hand, laws necessary to public safety — for example, traffic regulations — are given point and meaning to the average citizen when he is forced to realize the serious accidents which result from their infraction.

Many cities have ordinances prohibiting the sale of explosives for Fourth of July celebrations. For a time such regulations were bitterly opposed by young people and their parents who clung to the tradition of the "good old Fourth." The bare publication of the lists of children killed or maimed by explosives on the Fourth of July has been more effective than any argument or general plea for obedience to the law in educating the public to observe a "safe and sane" Independence Day.

It is sometimes said in criticism of the modern newspaper that it is no longer a moulder of public opinion, but is content to follow, to "give the public what it wants." The statement is not wholly justified, but in so far as it is justified it marks a progress rather than a retrogression. A

given newspaper almost always has a " policy," determined by the owner, on controversial questions of wide public interest, as, for example, prohibition, strikes, foreign relations, and political campaigns. This policy not infrequently colors the presentation of the news. Even on such questions, however, it does not make such overt and violent efforts to ram its opinions down the throats of its readers as did the papers of sixty or seventy years ago.

This gradual change, sometimes lamented as a loss of color and force or even of moral fervor, has a practical reason. The modern newspaper wishes to hold as large a circle of readers as possible, including those who may not at all points agree with its policy. But though the reason for the change is fundamentally economic, it also marks an improvement in principle.

The desire to mould public opinion means the desire to force others to accept one's own views. We are gradually coming to realize that such power does not properly belong in the hands of any man or group. The modern public prefers to possess its own soul. It has even learned to ask of its newspapers that rarest and most civilized of all the virtues — the virtue of tolerance. It asks to be given access to the facts and to pass its own judgment on those facts. Perhaps the change is due to the dissemination of the scientific spirit. At any rate, the modern public, if opinions are to be formed for it instead of by it, must be stalked warily. Except on occasions of wide-spread mob hysteria, it does not wish to be led obviously by the nose by means of exhortation or vituperation.

In following this social trend, the newspaper recognizes the existence, not of a single public, but of various publics holding legitimately varying opinions. Papers opposing our present prohibition laws, for example, do not suppress the news of incidents showing the disastrous effects of alcoholism

and do not refuse to report public statements of important persons in favor of prohibition. In the presidential campaign of 1928, the bitterest political struggle in many years, the speeches of Governor Alfred E. Smith were reported fully and accurately in the staunchest Republican papers.

No newspaper today would dream of opposing prohibition in its news columns in the vitriolic manner employed by abolitionist papers during the anti-slavery agitation preceding our Civil War; nor would any national political figure today be subject to the type of newspaper vilification which was hurled at President Johnson by his adversaries in the Reconstruction Era. If this increase in tolerance seems to bring with it a diminution in moral force, it should be remembered that even on moral questions there are differences of opinion and that these differences may rightly be acknowledged and respected.

" Giving the public what it wants " is a phrase which is often tinged with disapproval. The newspaper, it is said, should not give the public what it wants, but what it ought to have. This can only mean that one portion of the public should assume the right to give another portion of the public only what the first portion thinks the second portion ought to have. Thus stated, the proposition becomes more debatable.

Oddly enough, it is the less highly educated and presumably less intelligent portion of the public which assumes the least presumptuous and dictatorial attitude toward the taste of others. It is willing that even the type of public to which it does not belong should be allowed to have what it wants. The " tabloid " reader does not advocate depriving any one of his right to prefer the New York *Times* or the *Christian Science Monitor*. Yet those who prefer conservative newspapers are not content to assert their own

preferences, but inveigh against the very existence of the "sensational" press.

So long as the "tabloid" public exists, nothing in its tastes or character will be changed by arguing that it ought not to have any tabloids to read but should be forced to read the New York *Times*. It won't. If by gradual improvement in education and environment the entire population should reach the level of demanding only newspapers of the calibre of the *Times*, then the tabloids will cease to exist. But then, as now, the public will be getting what it wants. Until that time, there will be several different publics, served by different types of newspapers. Each public gets what it wants, according to its taste. So long as there is a profitable sale for the more sensational type of newspaper, that type will be published. The only way to change the character of our newspapers is to change the character of the public; and it is unlikely that the public will ever become so homogeneous as to demand only one type of paper.

It has been said that the newspaper is dependent on its readers for existence. But it is also true that society today, in many important respects, is dependent on the newspapers. No one can be even passably well informed about the world in which he lives without the aid of the press. Even the person who derives his knowledge of current events solely from the weekly or monthly magazine will find that the information contained in these magazines is in turn derived principally from the newspapers.

The newspaper has literally fulfilled the boast of the fairy Puck that he would place a girdle around the world in forty minutes. In olden times, our knowledge of events in distant parts of the earth depended on the tales brought back by travelers, whose reports were long delayed and often inaccurate. There was no way of checking such stories

except by spending long years in a similar journey. Those critics who blithely assert that "you can't believe newspaper talk" might profitably reflect on the inaccuracy of Herodotus and Marco Polo. Nowadays there is no corner of the earth so remote that reports from it cannot be checked, and promptly checked, for accuracy.

Moreover, events distant from one another in space often bear a close relation in their effects. Increased speed in transportation and increased speed in communication are the two forces most responsible for bringing different parts of the world into this close relation. Communication has far outstripped transportation in this respect, and the most rapid public communication is by means of the press. It still takes many months to reach the region of the South Pole, but the log of Commander Richard Byrd's expedition was published in the daily papers while its members were still held fast in the antarctic ice at the other side of the world.

The average citizen derives his knowledge of national and international affairs almost wholly from the newspapers. A complete daily record of the doings of Congress is printed in the *Congressional Record*. But if an acquaintance with the performances of our national lawmakers were limited to readers of the *Congressional Record* very few would be well informed, and even these few would have a less distinct and clearly organized knowledge of events than has the reader of the newspaper, for whose benefit a corps of qualified correspondents sifts the news and presents it in the order of its relative importance.

The citizen is not only dependent on the newspaper for his political and geographical information, and for his knowledge of national and international affairs, but his economic interests and even his recreation are affected by the press. Stock market reports and business news flashed

throughout the country have a direct bearing on the individual's income and expenditure. If he is interested in sports, he follows the progress of tournaments or of teams in the sports section of the paper, and thus becomes a vicarious participant in contests which he is unable to witness in person. He will even find expert instruction on the technic of the game which he himself likes to play. On the basis of newspaper reviews, he may decide what play to attend, what movie to see, what concerts to hear, and even what books he wishes to read.

The newspaper and the public are therefore interdependent. "The power of the press" is a phrase often used, but the ultimate power behind the press is the public. Public opinion can change for good or ill the policy, the format, even the financial organization of any newspaper on earth. Sometimes this force of public opinion works in behalf of prejudice, suspicion and suppression. Sometimes it works in behalf of enlightenment and justice. But it works.

For example, in 1929 the International Paper and Power Company purchased stocks or bonds in thirteen American newspapers. The president of the company insisted, and the owners of the papers likewise declared, that this was a legitimate commercial undertaking. It was stated, in apparent good faith on both sides, that the motive of the International Paper and Power Company was solely to secure a market for its product and that no attempt would be made to influence the editorial policy of the newspapers in favor of the power interests. Nevertheless, the public was so aroused to the danger of having any of its news organs controlled, even in part, by financial interests involved in public utilities that the International Paper and Power Company and the newspapers concerned bowed to the storm of public opposition and the business connections were severed.

Since the public is dependent on the newspapers for so much of its information, it is natural that it should feel itself in the power of an almost omnipotent press. It is true that an unscrupulous or an over-enthusiastic newspaper can mislead a portion of the public for its own ends or for what it conceives to be the public interest. Certain forged documents purporting to come from Mexico and containing allegations of bribery against four unnamed United States senators, which were published in a chain of newspapers in 1928, are a case in point. They furnish an example of the danger of attempting to mould public opinion through the press. For the principle, once admitted as defensible in questions which the individual regards as of incontestable moral value, will inevitably be extended to its logical extreme. Fortunately, there is usually an opposition press to present the other side of any issue, safeguard the accuracy of the news, and expose any dangerous tampering with the facts.

It is true that events involving unpopular opinions do not receive a sympathetic or even a perfectly unbiassed treatment in the news. Very small minorities do not have much space in the sun. The news treatment of conscientious objectors in war time and more recently of paraders in unpopular politico-economic causes may be taken as examples. But opinions so nearly universally unpopular over the entire country as to affect the entire body of the newspapers are few in number. If the local press becomes so inflamed over a local issue as to exhibit obvious bias, comment of the national press outside the inflamed area frequently redresses the balance.

The power of an unscrupulous or prejudiced press is thus strictly limited to the possibility of "fooling all the people all the time." In general, the press is precisely as fair-minded and tolerant as the public will allow it to be. Any

far-reaching and drastic criticism of the press is a criticism of the nation at large — and as such may be in some instances justified. But reform must begin with the people. There is only one force capable of creating intelligent and honest newspapers, and that is a public too intelligent to be duped and too honest to condone hypocrisy. The power of the press is limited and temporary. The power of the public over the press is ultimate and absolute. For without the support of the public, the newspapers perish.

EXERCISES

1. Let two or three members of the class form a committee to interview a local newspaper owner. Ask him to list for you the different items which make up the cost of issuing a single issue of the paper; to estimate the total cost of a day's production; how many copies are printed; how much is charged for a page of advertising, local and national.

2. Let the entire class take notes on the above report as it is given and then write an interview from this material. Keep the written interview in your notebook in order to note what changes you would make in the manner of presentation after you have studied how to write a newspaper interview.

3. What is the meaning of the slogan: "There is no substitute for circulation"? Is it true? Do you know who coined it?

4. Do you think the papers should be required to support prohibition in their news columns? To oppose strikes which result in violence? This could be done (1) by the manner in which facts are presented; (2) by the selection of the facts presented; (3) by the suppression of reports of opinions on the opposite side, such as might be contained in public speeches. Is such a procedure justified in support of a cause which you consider good, but not in support of one which you consider bad? Support your argument.

5. How has the press contributed to the progress of aviation?

6. What would be the effect on the life of the ordinary citizen

if all newspapers were to suspend publication for a day? For a year?

7. What is meant by the power of the press? What is its relation to public opinion? Make out two cases: one for the power of the press over the public; the other for the power of the public over the press.

8. With the aid of the reference department in your public library look up (1) the story of the Mexican documents; (2) the purchase of newspaper stock by the International Paper and Power Company.

III

NEWS

The primary function of the newspaper, as its name indicates, is the dissemination of news. There have been many definitions of news, but it still remains something more easy to recognize than to define. This almost intuitive quality in the faculty of discerning news values finds expression in the popular phrase, "a nose for news."

The most famous of all definitions of news is the one attributed to Charles A. Dana, celebrated editor of the old New York *Sun:* "If a dog bites a man, that is not news; but if a man bites a dog, that is news." This definition emphasizes the startling, unusual, or unexpected aspect of news. But like most epigrams it is too limited in application to be strictly accurate. If it were taken literally, we should have to say that if the senate investigates a man, that is not news, but if a man investigates the senate, that is news. This is patently absurd, for a senate investigation of a man, though it has happened many times, is obviously news.

Another definition, adopted by the Kansas Editorial Association, runs as follows: "News is an impartial report of the activities of mind, men, and matter which do not offend the moral sensibilities of the more enlightened people." This sounds well, but it will not hold water. It raises the difficult question: Who is empowered to decide who are the "more enlightened people?" Moreover, there are occasions on which moral sensibilities ought to be jarred. The Tea-

pot Dome scandals were calculated to offend the moral sensibilities of any one with a hide less thick than that of a rhinoceros, but that fact did not detract from their public importance and news value. From the practical point of view, no city editor who retained his senses or his job in Kansas or elsewhere would consider that the murder of the town's leading citizen in mysterious circumstances was not news, even though murder offends the moral sensibilities of all except the least enlightened people.

The manual issued by the United Press Association to its correspondents emphasizes the universal character of news in the following description: "A paradox that never changes is that there is nothing new under the sun, yet almost everything under the sun is news. Anything and everything interesting about life and materials in all their manifestations is news."

Perhaps the best working definition of news is another by Dana: "News is anything which interests a large part of the community and which has never been brought to their attention." This includes the two essential qualities of news: something about it must be interesting, and something about it must be new.

Not every news item in a daily paper chronicles an event which has just occurred, or which was altogether unknown previous to publication. The quality of being new is relative, not absolute. For example, a distinguished scientist spent twenty years in the study of tropical diseases, and finally announced his discovery of the cause of leprosy. His results were published in technical medical journals six months before an editor in the city where the scientist conducted his laboratory sent a reporter to interview him. Nothing in the story was new in the literal sense, but it was new to the general public. Many local feature stories present material that is new only in the sense that it has not

hitherto been brought to public attention. In strictly news stories, there is always some fresh development of the situation which justifies " breaking " the story. The existence of the tomb of King Tut was not news; but the opening of the tomb was news of the first order.

It is not necessary that news should be intrinsically important, although importance is one of several factors which may make for interest. Interest, not importance, is the touchstone; for, while not everything that is interesting is important, whatever is important must first be made interesting or it will not be read by the general public.

It is not the business of the newspaper to legislate as to what ought to interest humanity. It is merely its business to recognize, and to provide, what does interest a sufficiently large group. Making over the human race is one problem which the newspaper editor is spared. His conclusions as to what is interesting are derived from the laboratory of observation and experience. The criterion of interest cannot be the preferences of one person or of a limited group of persons, for in order to survive a newspaper must not restrict its appeal, and consequently its circulation, to one or a small group.

College professors might form one such group, and professional criminals another. College professors have been known to read the sports section, to be sure, and a professional criminal may quite conceivably desire information on the League of Nations; but the contents of the newspaper is determined by what these gentlemen share with each other as human beings, and not by the limitation of their interests to their special pursuits or education. Not every human being, of course, shares the interests of every other; but all interests which so overlap that they are shared by a sufficiently large number to effect circulation have their place as news.

The United Press lists a number of "spot news" categories for the guidance of its news gatherers. First comes "the outstanding national story and the outstanding international story of the day." Sports news is listed as "an ever increasing part of every newspaper." Financial or business news is of growing importance and includes stories of mergers, special dividends, and the actions or opinions of prominent figures in industry, commerce, and finance.

"Prohibition," according to the United Press Manual, "is a vital topic and it should be handled impartially, with both sides presented fairly and calmly. Aviation is even more widely interesting than prohibition. Biographical material — the human interest brand — is always sure of a play. Nothing is more generally interesting than accurate colorful details about people with news personality. Movie stars, actors and actresses, bankers, brokers, big business magnates, certain government officials, picturesque characters — all of these go to make part of the chronicles of the daily newspaper. Politics, both state and national, interest a tremendous following. 'Culture' is a news watchword in America. Scientific news, religious news and news of the arts command ever increasing attention."

Feature stories, including the short humorous "freak" usually ranging from 100 to 250 words and the longer news feature (400 to 800 words) developing a special subject from a fresh point of view in an interesting manner are a part of the daily news ration. Such stories differ from the essay or anecdote in that they have a point of departure suggested by current happenings or interests.

The foregoing news categories are strictly practical, but they are based on certain fundamental qualities of appeal rooted in the structure of human nature. The term "human interest story" is given a specialized meaning in a newspaper office, but in reality all stories are human interest

stories — even the stock market reports. The list of human interests is a curious and disjointed affair, because that is the sort of race to which we happen to belong. Any attempt at classification must admittedly be partial, but the following may serve to indicate a number of the bases of wide human appeal:

Economic interest. News by which the reader may hope to improve his own economic standing interests him. Stock market reports, the cost of living, the rise or fall in the prices of important commodities are examples. News of this nature is of rapidly growing importance in the press.

Contest appeal. This is the basis of the appeal of the sports pages. It extends to such silly performances as flagpole-sitting contests, coffee-drinking contests, and bathing beauty parades on the one hand; and on the other, it brought to the front page the intellectual contest in which forty-nine high school boys submitted to an examination in science with a college education offered by Thomas A. Edison as the prize.

Hero worship. This is the basis of the appeal of "success" stories. Its most striking contemporary example is the unprecedented publicity given to Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic by air.

Rescue appeal. Rescue stories are akin to hero stories, but the interest is concentrated chiefly on the event itself and only secondarily on the personality of those engaged.

Conflict. The essence of the appeal of conflict is a struggle against odds. Sometimes this takes the form of man's struggle with nature — for example, the taking of diphtheria serum by airplane and dog sleds to Nome, Alaska, and the search for the lost airplane, *City of San Francisco.* Sometimes it is a struggle between the individual and organized society, as in the pursuit of criminals, the solving of crime mysteries, and the reporting of trials. Sometimes

the struggle is between organized groups, economic or political, as in wars, campaigns, and strikes. Some element of conflict is present in most "hero worship" stories and rescue stories.

Feats of danger and daring. The appeal of these stories partakes of the struggle motive, the hero motive and sometimes of the contest motive. The feats themselves may be useful or useless, but it is not utility that determines their interest. The human fly scaling a building, the attempt to break various records of skill or strength, long distance flights and endurance flights, or, to take a more remote example, Wilhelm Tell shooting the apple from his son's head are in this category. The reader vicariously shares the thrill of suspense and the resulting emotion of triumph or disappointment.

The appeal of events affecting large organized groups. International, national, state and civic affairs come under this head. The more remote the group from the reader's personal concerns, the larger it must be in order to command his interest. A change in the national government in England is of news interest to Americans, but not the erection of a new school house in an English village, although this would be of news interest to the community in which it happened.

Discovery, invention, exploration. These are a part of man's conquest of nature. They must be treated in such a way as to appeal to the love of adventure, affect the daily lives of a large number of persons, or have an element of the bizarre which captures the imagination if they are to have news value. A polar expedition is an example of the first type of appeal; discovery of the cause or cure of a wide-spread disease exemplifies the second; the finding of dinosaur eggs in the Gobi desert is an instance of the third.

Incongruity (the appeal of the unusual, the bizarre, the

humorous). This appeal is the basis of many small stories, but of few big ones. To it belong stories of "the man bites the dog" type. If a pet cat strays from its owner, the incident will be printed only in the "Lost and Found" column. But if a lion strays from a circus and is found curled up on a citizen's front porch, the occurrence has the makings of a news story. Many rather commonplace events can be turned into "freak" stories by playing up this element of appeal. The biggest or the smallest individual in any given class, or unusual variations from type, such as the birth of quadruplets or Siamese twins, are phenomena of apparently perennial interest because of their unusual character.

Fame appeal. The fame may be legitimate or spurious, but whatever happens to a "news personality" — that is, to some one whose name is widely known for any reason whatsoever — has the interest necessary to make it news. If Lindbergh arrives late at his destination, if Peggy Joyce marries again, if the Prince of Wales falls off his horse, these incidents are sure to be chronicled. An example of a simon pure "fame interest" story, reduced to its limits of absurdity, was transmitted by Associated Press from Constantinople: "The prime minister has learned to swim. Underneath big headlines a newspaper thus records his progress: 'Our honored leader, Ismet Pasha, swam several yards in the Marmora devoid of the life belt which he has habitually been wearing during these exercises.'"

We smile at this, but in our own America, columns are devoted to a description of the gowns worn at the opening of the opera season. The society columns are a pure example of fame interest in its local application. Obscure persons like to read of the doings of the less obscure, and those who are less obscure are flattered to read about themselves. The more famous the person, the less susceptible he is to

this sort of flattery, but conversely, the greater is his news value to the public at large.

Scandal news depends on the fame appeal. If two stevedores fight on the wharf, nobody cares but themselves; if two senators engage in fisticuffs on the floor of the senate chamber, the encounter will not escape the notice of the press. In the summer of 1929, the son of Senator Heflin was described as arriving in New York in an intoxicated condition. The young man was not arrested; he was probably not the only young man in New York in that condition. Yet the story was carried by wire over the entire country. In this case the element of incongruity reinforced the fame appeal, since Senator Heflin is not only a news personality but is a strong advocate of prohibition.

There is a variation of the fame appeal which gives interest to stories of the " how are the mighty fallen " type. We like to set up idols to worship, but we also like to tear them down. Extreme popularity is often followed by a popular reaction. This trait finds expression in the popular saying, " The higher they go, the harder they fall." The bankruptcy of a supposedly wealthy man; the adulation, followed by criticism verging on ridicule, of Queen Marie of Roumania when she visited this country; the change in the attitude of the general public towards Suzanne Lenglen and later towards Helen Wills — all indicate that there is a contrariness in human nature which makes us set certain individuals on pedestals and then feel a sense of satisfaction in knocking them down again. The equestrian tumbles of the Prince of Wales were of news interest, not only because of his fame appeal, but also because falling off his horse placed him in a slightly ridiculous position. Something of this same trait governs the interest shown in the domestic discords or scandals of prominent persons. Even crimes are given space in accordance with the prominence or social

status of the persons affected, and thus partake of the fame appeal, unless they contain a pronounced element of the unusual, the mysterious, or the conflict-interest of pursuit of the criminal.

The appeal to primary emotions. Stories with a theme of love, pity, horror, fear, sympathy, jealousy, and sacrifice are sure of an emotional response on the part of the reader, for these emotions are a part of our fundamental human heritage. Thus, stories of elopement touch the romantic chord. Stories of children and animals excite sympathy. Stories of accident and disaster appeal to horror, pity, and fear. Stories of distress and poverty arouse sympathy which often takes a practical form.

Some equally deep-seated human emotions are far from pretty, and continue to exist as relics of a pre-civilized era. Few newspapers deliberately cater to these vestiges of the primitive in human nature, but their existence cannot be entirely ignored. For example, it would be hard to imagine any event more devoid of civilized interest than the official execution of a criminal. It contains no element of suspense, of conflict, of daring, of heroism, or even of the "sporting chance." Revenge is by no means an admirable motive; but it is about the best that can be brought forward as the emotional appeal which necessitates news reports of the executions of such criminals as remain in the public interest. The great mass of readers have not been personally injured by the offender, and therefore have only a general and diluted motive even for revenge.

The truth seems to be that human nature includes a delight in horror for its own sake, just as it includes a delight in excitement and even in violence for their own sakes. As a further example, we may note that a fight or accident in which no one is killed is of less news interest than one in which lives are lost. The best way to outgrow such of these

relics of savagery as the human race might creditably dispense with is to face them frankly and without camouflage for what they are. It is only fair to say that the press in general minimizes rather than exaggerates these forms of emotional appeal. But so long as they remain in the subcellars of human nature they will, to some extent at least, be reflected in the news.

EXERCISES

1. Which of the definitions of news quoted do you prefer? Why? Do you know any others? Can you formulate a definition of news suitable for your student paper?

2. What were the Teapot Dome scandals? (Consult the library or the department of American history.)

3. What sort of news stories do you read with greatest interest? Why?

4. What part of your paper do you usually skip? Why?

5. In American papers, the most important stories are given top heads on page one. Note what stories in a current issue of your local paper are given this position. What form of appeal determines the news value in each instance?

6. What appeals to interest are available in your school or college life as a basis of news for your student paper?

IV

"I SAW IN THE PAPER"

It is impossible to rank the different appeals to interest in the order of their importance and thus to generalize as to the apportionment of space allotted to each in the day's paper. It is impossible even to estimate the percentage of space given to different types of news over a whole year and have the estimate mean anything more than that certain events during that year were considered worthy of a certain amount of space in a particular locality. During a presidential campaign, more space will be given to national politics than at other times. In a given year there is likely to be at least one "national" crime story: one, that is, that receives almost unlimited space in its own locality and is reported at some length over the whole country. Probably the largest amount of space ever given to a single story was devoted to Lindbergh's flight to Paris — a story in which the "hero-worship" appeal predominated, with strong elements of adventure, conflict with nature, danger and daring.

The season of the year has an effect on the relative importance of different types of news. The Wimbledon and national tennis matches are sure to be played on page one, as are the national golf tournaments. The World Series in baseball also gives to its particular season an enormous inflation in sports news. June sees an increase in the space given to school news, due to the various commencement activities.

Under the title, "One Day," the Philadelphia *Evening*

Bulletin has printed in book form the entire contents of one edition of one issue of that paper, exclusive of advertisements. The day chosen was June 4, 1928. The reading matter and pictures filled 102.48 columns of the paper, and, when reprinted in ordinary book type, made a volume of 307 pages. In analyzing the contents of this "sample" paper, the word "pages" refers to book pages, not newspaper pages.

The lead story of the day was on the subject of aviation, for the paper was issued at the time of the flight of the "Southern Cross" from Hawaii to Fiji. There were nine stories in all on the subject of aviation, filling 24 pages. Nine pages were given to the "Southern Cross" flight, eight to the flight of the "Friendship" from Newfoundland, and one to the search from Moscow for the lost dirigible, "Italia."

A total of twelve stories (six and one-half pages) was allotted to crime. This included the sentencing of four motorists for infraction of the traffic laws. There were two murders, four robberies, one suicide, and one simple assault. This small proportion of crime news is due simply to the fact that in the course of human events a big aviation story broke that day and a big crime story did not break. It does not indicate that aviation is always of superior news value to crime, or vice versa. (Compare the news analysis of the Oakland *Tribune* at the end of this chapter, in which the proportion of space given to crime is raised by the fact that a "national" crime story, located in California, furnished the lead story of the day.)

Nine accidents, four of them automobile accidents, filled six pages. If a major accident, such as the sinking of the "Vestris," had occurred on this day, it would have been the lead story, and the proportion of space given to accidents would have been increased accordingly.

Affairs of large organized groups were given space distribution as follows: Politics furnished twelve stories (six national, four state or local, and two on civic affairs, semi-political in nature) occupying seven and one-half pages. The date was shortly before the national political party conventions, and the national political stories were therefore on this topic. Three stories (four pages) were given to international affairs. Seven stories (thirteen and one-half pages) were about schools and colleges, including commencements, awarding of scholarships, and addresses of speakers. The time of year assured a special play to school news. Church affairs were given eight stories (six pages) distributed among Catholics, Protestants and Jews.

Financial affairs, including stock market reports, covered thirty-one pages.

Fifty-one and one-half pages were given to sports. Ten sports, amateur and professional, were represented: tennis, track, baseball, golf, rowing, polo, swimming, horse racing, boxing, and horse show. The season, of course, precluded football news.

Five stories on commerce and industry filled three pages. The subjects were a bankers' convention, election of the president of a railway brotherhood (labor), a large realty deal, a new bank building, and the appointment of a business committee by the local Chamber of Commerce. A large local strike might have lifted this class of news into first place.

Human interest stories in the technical sense furnished eleven items (eight and three-fourths pages). Five were of fame appeal: the governor of the state given an honorary degree; announcement of the engagement of the daughter of a prominent family; views of the president of a large tobacco company on speculation; return to the city of a United States senator who was a local resident; a railroad presi-

dent's views on aviation. Three were stories of rescue and daring: "Blind Storekeeper Saves Three Children at Fire"; parachute jumper attempts to break record for "free fall" before opening his parachute; "Youth Saves Two from Cliff."

Two stories concerned domestic relations (separation and divorce). Both were susceptible of somewhat unusual or humorous treatment, and were written from this angle of interest. One "human interest" story presented a current development of one of the biggest appeal-to-sympathy stories of the year — the damage suit of five women workers, totally disabled by radium poisoning, against the corporation which had employed them.

Society news filled seven pages. Clubs (both men's and women's) were given three stories (one and one-fourth pages). Many papers have a regular department for club activities, especially women's organizations, and give it a definite amount of space each day, exceeding the above allotment.

The following come under the head of public announcements: radio programs, twelve pages; ship movements, one page; marriage licenses, three pages; obituaries, two and one-half pages; weather (two stories), two and one-half pages.

Four news stories, filling one and one-half pages, are not readily classifiable. An item on the return of the seventeen-year-locusts may be rated as economic (agricultural) or as the appeal of the unusual; the escape of an insane patient is an appeal to the emotion of fear; the waste of 170,000 gallons of water by the opening of two fire plugs carries a hint of local politics; "World News in Brief" is a box containing four brief summaries of events treated at greater length elsewhere in the paper. Of these, three items referred to aviation and the fourth to foreign affairs.

Feature stories fall into a class by themselves. They present information in an entertaining manner, approaching the short essay on the one hand and the news story on the other. They may be roughly divided into news features, syndicate features (which have no local angle), and departmental features.

The issue which we are analyzing contained seven news feature stories (eight and one-half pages); two and one-half pages of short "freaks"; two syndicate features, exclusive of those on the Women's Page and on the editorial page. Local departmental features occupied seven and one-fourth pages and included letters to the editor, requests for advice and information, a "quiz" on the news of the day, etc.

The Women's Page, which covered twelve pages, was composed entirely of syndicated material on such topics as fashions, child training, home furnishings, and the like. It also included fiction, but this is listed separately. Reprints of poems were published both on the Women's Page and the editorial page. Syndicated material, it may be explained, is prepared for distribution at a central office and is then sold to one paper in each local territory; the same syndicate handles many different features.

Fiction filled twenty-eight pages. It included one short story, two serials, and a story for children.

Editorial matter filled eighteen and one-half pages.

Photographs, exclusive of cuts illustrating stories, filled eight and one-half pages; cartoons and comics, fifteen and one-half pages. (The size of photographs, cartoons, and comics was somewhat reduced for book publication.)

No reviews of books, plays, moving pictures, or musical events were in this issue. Some papers run one or more of these departments daily, but many confine them to the Sunday editions.

This résumé of the contents of a single edition of a metropolitan newspaper gives us some idea of the variety of material which, for one reason or another, comes under the head of news and of information or entertainment more or less closely related to news. The two general types of newspapers, sensational and conservative, with various intermediate types leaning in one direction or the other, differ in their treatment of news rather than in their actual selection of material. They also differ in the position and the amount of space accorded a given story.

The sensational paper insists that its stories shall be short, on the theory that the reader of the class to whom it is addressed cannot hold his attention on a single topic long enough to read a lengthy account. Consequently, sensational papers, for the sake of brevity, tend to bald statements. The more conservative papers are careful to qualify their statements and consequently their stories are more cumbersome but more exact. The conservative papers give less play to stories for their purely emotional appeal; but a big story of powerful emotional appeal is about the best thing that can break to cheer any city editor's day, regardless of the type of newspaper he serves. The tabloids carry the principle of the sensational newspapers a point further, and are addressed to a public which cannot strain its attention to read anything to speak of, and must have its stories laid before it largely in pictorial form. Since these different types of public exist, with their different tastes and mental capacities, there is a valid reason for the existence of the different types of newspapers responding to their needs.

It cannot be too often reiterated that the newspaper reflects the interests of the public or large sections of the public. As these interests change, the play given to the news changes with them. Golf, once the pastime of a few, is now of such general interest as to be sure of extended news

presentation. The extension of interest in sports in general is reflected in the increased space given to it. The growing interest in financial news has been similarly recognized. Aviation is of such great popular interest at the present time that many papers have established aviation departments under special editors. Science has increased in news value since scientists have come to realize the importance to themselves and to their work of making their aims and achievements comprehensible to the layman; for the most abstruse forms of research can seldom be carried on without money, and the money for foundations and endowments usually depends on arousing the interest of some member or members of the public.

The most common criticisms of the treatment of news in the modern newspaper are three in number: it is sometimes accused of inaccuracy in its statements; of sensationalism in presentation; and of an over-emphasis on crime in its selection of news material.

Of these, the last named is the criticism most often expressed by those with the least realistic understanding of both newspapers and humanity. Curiously enough, persons who would readily admit that they lack sufficient knowledge to "reform" the principles of airplane construction, feel themselves qualified to undertake the reform not only of newspaper production, which in itself is highly specialized and complex, but of human society, which is even less simple.

The most practical and complete answer to the demand that crime news should be left out of the paper is that it has been tried. Several years ago an editor, in a heroically scientific spirit, conducted the experiment. He omitted all crime news from his paper for one week. By that time sales had fallen off so alarmingly that a continuance of the policy would have resulted in the extinction of the paper — and a dead paper has lost its usefulness both to its owner

and as an example of the way in which a newspaper should be run.

The desire of a certain section of the public to suppress the publication of crime news is based on the belief that we tend to approve or imitate whatever we see presented as a fact and that therefore crime news encourages criminality. By the same reasoning, the reporting of fires should be suppressed on the ground that it might encourage arson. No doubt, in a few psychopathic individuals this latter conclusion is quite sound. But so immense a social institution as the press is necessarily addressed to the large number of normal persons, not to the abnormal minority. If the mere reading of crime news made criminals, reporters who cover crime stories and city editors who have not the reader's privilege of skipping them should furnish more recruits to crime than any other class of persons. Yet only one sensational murder in the last fifty years was committed by a newspaper editor; and no one follows the same line of reasoning and contends that the large number of murderers who have been church goers were incited to crime by the scenes of violence recorded in the Bible.

It is a sweeping but safe statement that no person was ever induced to commit a crime by reading crime news in the papers unless that person was so pronouncedly psychopathic in the first place that he would in any event fail to adjust himself to the rules of normal society. In so far as the normal person tends to imitate what he reads, his imitation is directed toward what is held up for his admiration, not what is recorded as mere fact or presented as reprehensible.

The acts of a criminal cannot find their way into print until he is caught, or at least until the entire forces of the law, reinforced by public sentiment, are engaged in seeking him. In neither case is his predicament one to inspire en-

thusiastic imitation. He is always the villain of the piece, the hunted, the vanquished.

Actual crimes are of three general classes, for none of which the press can be held responsible. There are the acts of the professional criminal, who regards crime as simply a way of making a living. For these, social environment acting on the individual is chiefly responsible — in his own small and unfortunate circle, the successful criminal is held up as a hero. Economic circumstances undoubtedly play their part in creating this environment. In the second class are the isolated crimes due to the explosive outlet of uncontrolled or misguided emotion — crimes of jealousy, hate, revenge, greed, anger, and fear. The third class, often spectacular in themselves but numerically small, are the strictly psychopathic crimes — crimes of cruelty, perversion, and those in which the announced motive is insufficient to account for the violence of the act. All three classes of crime are chronicled in the newspaper, but the influence of publicity even on the third class is in reality negligible. As every student of criminology or of abnormal psychology knows, crimes of all three types, including the psychopathic, were of common occurrence long before the advent of the modern newspaper.

The question remains: Why is a big crime story of such wide-spread interest that no newspaper editor can afford to disregard it? Why are mild and respectable citizens so interested in a "national" crime story that large numbers of them will buy the paper that prints it and will not buy the paper that omits it, thus making it worth while for newspapers and news agencies to go to the expense of sending their best correspondents to the scene and leasing special wires to carry the news of the trial from the court room?

The immediate answer is one of fact, not of theory. It

has always been so. Aristotle considered tragedy the loftiest form of drama, " purging the soul," as he said, through its appeal to the emotions of horror and pity. Aristotle in this judgment showed himself a good modern psychologist. He also recognized the value of the " fame appeal " in enhancing the effect of tragedy, when he held that the tragic protagonist should belong to the " how are the mighty fallen " type. In our own day, the news value of a crime story is greatly increased if it affects prominent persons either as perpetrators or victims.

Œdipus Rex is a great crime story; so is *Macbeth;* and so is *Hamlet.* These masterpieces were founded on the " crime news " of their own or an earlier day, transmitted by written chronicles or oral tradition. They survive, not merely by virtue of literary composition — the stories had already survived for a long while before they were given permanent literary form as works of art — but because they are essentially " great stories " in the newspaper sense. If they " broke " today, they would hold the front page in every newspaper in the country, and for precisely the same reason that their modern counterparts hold it.

The analogy between the crime stories embalmed in literary masterpieces and the crime stories in the daily press is a close and literal one. The mild and respectable citizen reads his crime news in the same spirit in which he reads fiction. He responds to it precisely as the Athenian audience responded to *Œdipus Rex,* as the Elizabethan audience responded to *Macbeth.* That response is not intellectual but emotional. The reader has not added to his store of useful information, but he is interested.

Why, for example, did two dull and commonplace persons instantly become interesting to large numbers of their fellow human beings merely because they combined to hit another equally dull, commonplace and inoffensive person over the

head with a sash weight (the Gray-Snyder case)? It was because they thereupon ceased to be mere individuals and became in a sense fictional characters through whom the reader plumbed the depths of horror, pity, guilt and remorse, plunging vicariously out of the shallows into the uncharted depths of human motive and conduct.

The reader has not the faintest impulse himself to hit anybody over the head with a sash weight, but in reading their story he shares imaginatively the entire range and the darkest abysses of our human heritage. Whatever else murder may be, it is not trivial. It is an extremity of human conduct whereby human beings, in other respects like ourselves, fall monstrously in a clash with circumstance, which the Greeks called man's conflict with an overwhelming fate. As he turns his fascinated gaze over the precipice, the reader, who may never have heard of Aristotle, achieves what that astute Greek called an emotional catharsis.

For the incontrovertible reason that the human mind was created after this pattern, the extremities of human conduct and emotion are interesting, although they may be the reverse of admirable. They remain so interesting to such an immense number of normal human beings that newspaper editors print them — not for their own amusement but by mandate of the public. The fear of alienating the public on whom its existence depends is the only final fear the newspaper knows. When the public ceases to be interested in crime news, the newspapers, obeying the ancient law of self preservation, which needs no external enforcement, will cease to print it.

In addition to its firm psychological basis, crime news has also a practical and social justification. It has been said that "publicity is the most militant arm of the law." It is impossible to search into causes or to modify undesirable conditions without a knowledge of the facts; to take a

single example, the publicity given a series of prison mutinies in 1929 forcibly called to public attention the hideously crowded conditions in some of our state prisons. Crime is one of the most important problems confronting the nation today. It is a problem very closely affecting the public at large. The public, through its medium, the press, would be foolish indeed to shut its eyes to the problem merely because the details are unpleasant.

Many critics who deplore the attention given to crime news have an exaggerated idea of the actual space given to the topic. This unconscious exaggeration is in large part due to the quality of interest which such news holds. It attracts the attention and remains in the memory when other topics, to which even more space has been given, are forgotten. Even when a national crime story is at its height, more columns are devoted to sports and to finance than to crime. In a census of one hundred papers, Professor Eric W. Allen, dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Oregon, found that thirty-five per cent of the total news space was given to the three combined topics of crime, divorce, and scandal. The exposure of public crimes, such as graft and misconduct in office, is obviously an important public service that could not fall under the disapproval of any thoughtful reader.

Divorce, of course, is not a crime but a recognized process of law. Nevertheless, divorce stories are often placed in the same category with crime stories by critics of the American press, who point with approbation to the English custom of suppressing the evidence in divorce cases. In this connection it is interesting to note that Lord Merrivale, chief justice of the court in charge of divorce cases in England, considers the censorship of the press in these cases detrimental rather than beneficial to public welfare. Lord Merrivale recently gave to the press for publication all of

the facts in a celebrated high society divorce case of a decidedly scandalous nature, with the following explanation of his action:

"I have stated these facts because in my judgment it is not in public interest that crimes of this kind should be committed and that the particulars of the offense should not be known to the world in which these people live. One of the deterrents of misconduct is publicity."

The charge that the newspapers exaggerate facts for the sake of making the story more sensational, or that they deliberately over-emphasize stories of this character, is limited in scope to the less conservative papers; but even within the limits of its application it is singularly ill-founded. Some papers give a story more sensational treatment than others; but the most sensational of them all is a triumph of understatement, compared with the sensationalism of actual facts. Any group of newspaper men, or of doctors or lawyers, for that matter, can tell tales from real life or give the hidden facts behind stories covered in the press which make the most screaming tabloid appear by comparison about as lurid as the telephone directory. Any story whose sensational elements are apparently "played up" is, it is safe to state, "played down" if the standard is reality; the conservative papers merely play it down still further.

The reason for this policy lies, once again, with the public. The majority of the public does not care to read words whose associations are too horrifying or too unpleasant, or which violate the taboos of ordinary speech. Words and facts which are generally considered unsuitable for conversation are either expurgated altogether, or are so wrapped about with euphemism that only the person who can read between the lines will grasp their meaning. So far from calling a spade a spade, newspapers, to a far greater degree than books, since they are addressed to a more mis-

cellaneous public, refer to it with extreme caution as an agricultural implement.

This caution often proceeds to such lengths that perfectly straightforward and uncolored scientific terms are evaded and circumlocutions substituted. The legal designations of offensive crimes are barred; so are a large number of medical terms. Details of horrifying and offensive occurrences are generalized and softened. Many newspapers even bar the word *corpse* as too unpleasant and insist that only the word *body* should be used. Diseases are seldom mentioned by name. The names of specific poisons are almost always omitted.

Exaggeration of facts — such as over-estimating the number of deaths in a disaster — brings its own swift and practical punishment. Each newspaper is subject to the check of other, rival, newspapers. The public is thus not slow to discover that it has been duped, and it is not friendly to the agency that has misled it. For the same reason, the day of "faking" stories has passed. A faked story is far too dangerous to be profitable, and it is now universally recognized as bad policy.

Sometimes one hears the remark, "It's just newspaper talk" or "I suppose the newspapers must have something to write about, whether it is true or not." As a matter of sober fact, newspapers are far more careful to check the accuracy of their statements than are ninety-nine out of a hundred individuals in conversation or even in more formal modes of address. A newspaper statement, because of its wide circulation, is subject to almost certain contradiction if it is made on an uncertain foundation. For this reason, misquotation is far less common than it is popularly supposed to be. When it occurs it is always accidental; and the unfortunate reporter who repeats the offense is not long on the payroll. Sometimes the person quoted wishes after-

wards that he had not said what he actually did say and either by a process of "wishful thinking" convinces himself that he could not really have said it or else deliberately denies the uncomfortable fact and accuses the paper of misrepresentation.

Good will is an important asset to any newspaper. The person who has been quoted once may be useful as a source of information at some later time. Corrections, when they must be made, are humiliating and destructive of public confidence. Moreover, the laws of libel hover over the shoulder of every editor and make him far less likely to be rash than to be over-cautious. The newspaper is held directly responsible for the publication even of quoted statements assigned to their author by name and correctly quoted. Every editor is acutely aware that tampering with the facts is like playing with dynamite — and his life is already hectic enough without adding unnecessarily to its dangers.

The charge of bias in the handling of the news is somewhat more subtle and to some extent justified. Bias is the seamy side of policy. There is no completely unbiased human being — and the news is written and edited by human beings. Bias may be indistinguishable from point of view and may even be defensible. For example, few would quarrel with the bias of newspapers in favor of law-abiding as against lawless conduct. On debatable issues the almost inescapable human bias is to a great extent rigidly limited. It is a generally enforced rule that "editorializing" — that is, the expression of opinion as distinguished from the recording of facts — shall be excluded from the news columns.

Nevertheless, newspapers, like individuals, may have acknowledged and recognizable opinions, called policies. They may favor one or the other political party, may be friendly or unfriendly to organized labor or organized capi-

tal, may support or oppose prohibition. However, they have learned that they stand to lose far more than they gain by allowing these convictions to color their news reports to the extent of obvious unfairness. Because convictions, even prejudices, are an inseparable part of the equipment of human nature, it is advantageous that every encouragement should be given to newspapers representing all shades of opinion; but all of them should be equally careful not to distort facts for the sake of upholding their side of any argument.

The trend of the modern newspaper, it has been observed, is away from instruction, special pleading, and argument and toward entertainment and the conveying of information without ulterior purpose. This tendency is sometimes deplored, but it nevertheless exists and is not necessarily deplorable. The day of newspaper "crusades" is largely past — that is, of crusades initiated and promoted by the paper itself. When still engaged in, they are supported as a business enterprise for their effect on circulation, in behalf of causes which have or may be expected to have strong public backing. The newspaper may give its support to any given cause, reporting its progress sympathetically and advocating its success editorially, but it is not often the direct initiator of such movements.

The true subject matter of the newspaper is the news; that is, it is a record of events. Its world is the world of what is rather than what ought to be. As it has become more impersonal and more impartial, it has adopted as its special function, not to preach and exhort its readers to hold certain opinions or bring about certain effects, but simply to report what goes on in the world in all its immense variety of aspects, leaving it to the reader to draw his own conclusions and decide on his own action.

ANALYSIS OF OAKLAND (CAL.) *TRIBUNE* FOR OCTOBER 15, 1929

Subject	*Number of Stories*	*Inches*
Group Interests		
National	13	90
State	6	40.75
Local politics	3	30
Civic affairs	22	93.75
Organizations and conventions	54	237.5
Foreign news (all subjects)	35	151.75
Education	20	61.5
Churches	3	9
Economic Interests		
Industry and commerce	22	74
Finance (including stock market reports)		675.75
Shipping (including sailing announcements)		65.75
Agriculture	7	22.5
Crime (including misdemeanors and civil suits)	34	214
The lead story of the day was a national crime story.		
Accidents and disasters	37	97.5
Aviation	27	111
Sports	54	411
Domestic relations	11	45.75
Rescue	1	6
Heroism	1	4.5
Unusual, humorous, incongruous ("freaks")	23	65.75
Sympathy stories (children, animals, etc.)	5	25
"Fame appeal" stories	16	45.5
Society		41.25
Science and invention	6	29.75
Amusements		
Music	1	4.75
Radio (program announcements)		70.75
Drama and motion pictures		64.75
Obituaries	5	16.75
Statistics (births, deaths, marriage licenses, divorces filed)		37
Weather		10.75
Miscellaneous	6	12

	Inches
Non-News Material	
Editorials	41
Local departments	
"Column"	20.25
Letters to the paper	28.25
Personal advice column	23
Information bureau	11.25
Short specials (20 Years Ago, Embarrassing Moment, etc.)	11
Children's department (Children's Magazine run Sunday)	6.75
Books, art, and music on Sunday	
Fashions	15.75
Fiction	42
Syndicate features	200.5
Pictures	
Illustrating stories	535
Cartoons and comics	282.25
Total number of inches	4083

EXERCISES

1. Make a chart of an issue of your local newspaper similar to the chart of the Oakland *Tribune* given in the text. (This is a long, hard job but an interesting one, and when it is finished you will find that you have learned a great deal about news values).

2. Note the special circumstances of time and place which governed the special play given to certain topics in the issue analyzed.

3. Interview your sociology teacher or your English teacher on the argument for crime news given in the text. Write the interview as if for newspaper publication, remembering that your readers cannot be expected to have read the text.

4. If you have not read Shakespeare's plays, *Julius Cæsar* and *Macbeth,* look up a summary of their plots. Give a news summary of their plots. Give a news summary of the death of Julius Cæsar and of the murder of Macbeth.

5. What elements of news appeal in these two stories would ensure their appearance on page one if they happened today?

6. As news stories, what portions of the occurrences would have to be handled with extreme care to avoid libel?

7. Read Mark Antony's funeral oration in Shakespeare's play. Does it contain any statements which the reporter today would hesitate to quote for fear of libel? In each of these assignments, remember that you are not to summarize the plot of the play but are to take the point of view that the story of the two deaths has just "broken" as news. You need not at this time try to write a complete news story, but simply outline how you think the events would be handled in the paper.

V

NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION

The American newspaper differs from its foreign contemporary less widely than is usually assumed. The differences, like those between the inhabitants of different countries, are most striking where they are most superficial; for human nature remains essentially the same wherever it is found.

American newspapers are larger in bulk and carry a greater amount of advertising than those of England. As one writer for the English press puts it: "America's newspapers, with their vast number of pages, say to their readers, 'Here is the news of the world — everything — take your choice'; and England's papers, limited in space by their smaller size and format, say to their readers, 'Men with trained minds who have spent their lives in selecting and editing the world's news have competently chosen the most important parts of it for you — here it is — read it.'"

There is also a fairly general opinion among foreign observers that the American press, perhaps because of our geographical isolation, reports European news more fully and freely than does the press of countries nearer the scene of action. J. Alfred Spengler, who visited the United States as first senior fellow in journalism on the Walter Hines Page Foundation and recorded his impressions in his book, *Through English Eyes*, remarks: "On certain subjects which baffle the European press, such as the economic condition of Fascist Italy or Bolshevik Russia, enterprising

American correspondents seem able to write with a fullness and freedom which are denied to their confrères in Europe."

But the contrast which calls forth most frequent comment is a mere matter of dress, of the physical appearance of the paper resulting from its "play" of the news, which makes the English visitor shudder at the screaming headlines of the American press and on the other hand leads the American reader to condemn the English papers as depressingly dull and stodgy in appearance.

The mere color or size of type does not, of course, affect in the least the sensational character of the statements which that type records. "California beats Stanford, 21–6" may appear (and, if it happened, would appear in Pacific coast papers) in letters several inches tall; but there is nothing hair-raising in the statement itself, except possibly to the student bodies of the universities concerned.

It is the practice of American papers to place their most important stories at the top of the front page, the leading positions being given to the first and last columns on the page. Pages two and three are the next most important positions, followed by the front pages of the various sections and the back page unless that is reserved for editorial matter. English papers, on the contrary, bury their main stories inside and present want-ads and obituaries on page one. Yet the one paper may be just as sensational in content as the other. For example, at the top of a column on the front page of the London *Times* for September 17, 1929, appeared the following "personal": "Your little Rabbit is lonely, darling. Where are you? All yours received and loved. Mine anon. All my love. Your own Princess." These remarks certainly cannot be said to be lacking in color and emotional implications; in fact, this type of advertisement would be refused admittance to the columns of many American newspapers.

Wittily, but with considerable critical justification, a writer from London observes in *The New Yorker* that English papers by no means underplay their sensational news. His particular basis for comparison is a poisoning case "which would perhaps have got one long story in the American press, followed by occasional shorts, with a gradual loss of interest all around except possibly in one of the tabloids. The entire British press has given itself over to an exhaustive transcript of the coroner's inquest, with the *Times* each day giving two or three columns to it under the dignified running head, 'The Exhumations at Croydon.' . . . The whole theory of news reporting in England is based on the reduction of every event to a personal basis, which is the secret of popular appeal in journalism."

The same trans-Atlantic observer notes that sensational news is by no means suppressed, although it is well hidden, in the French newspapers. The French editor, he writes, "can take the story of an Atlantic flight or a cabinet crisis and undress it until it looks like something in the special Westchester section of the (New York) *Times*. The left-hand column of the front page is usually given over to a red-hot story called something like: 'Molière During the Middle Period of his Productivity.' The right-hand column is probably a signed outburst by the owner of the paper urging the restoration of the Bourbons. . . . And inside, on page three, all nestled together in little two-line dispatches, will be the brief announcement that China is on fire or that a tunnel has been found already built under the English Channel. . . .

"In one department, however, the French newspapers excel, and that is in the reporting of crime. Crimes of violence which the American papers would hardly think worth a stick of type are written up by the French with a zest and thoroughness which make of each one a special case in

criminology. Such papers as *Le Petit Marseillais*, after a perfunctory story on how the debts and the bicycle tour are coming on, settle down each day to five or six solid pages of murder, arson, sex, and robbery which apparently have been occupying the time of the entire citizenry the day before." After all, the common assumption that American newspapers are sensational, because of their headlines and arrangement of news stories, is based on the external organization of news material rather than on the selection of the material itself.

One of the most striking tendencies of the American press is the establishment of groups or chains of papers in different centers, under the same ownership. Thirty-five per cent of the total newspaper circulation in the United States is divided among fifty-five members of these chains, which include a total of 250 newspapers capitalized at $500,000,000. The largest group, comprising twenty-eight papers, is owned by William Randolph Hearst. The second largest is the Scripps-Howard chain, which includes twenty-five papers. A different development of the chain idea is the North American Newspaper Alliance, a group of widely separated newspapers in the United States and Canada, individually owned and operated, but banded together for co-operation and mutual aid.

The establishment of newspaper chains has been criticized on the ground that it results in too great standardization of the newspaper product and stifles individuality of the press. It is, however, in accordance with the modern trend of industry in many of its phases. It is true that the same syndicated material appears in each paper of the chain, which is therefore not entirely individual and local in its make-up. On the other hand, this material is often of a higher quality than would be locally obtainable. Moreover, the resources of the entire chain can be thrown to the aid of one paper in

the group when necessity arises; or these resources can be used to send correspondents and give coverage to a distant story, which might be financially beyond the means of a local independent owner. It is also argued by upholders of the newspaper chain system that local independence in policy is actually fostered rather than weakened; that, for example, a fight for improving local conditions against opposition can be undertaken and successfully carried out because the financial backing of the entire chain enables the individual paper to weather the storm.

There are sound arguments on both sides of the controversy. The truth is, doubtless, that there is room for both types of newspaper organization, just as there is room for both the chain store and the individually owned store in our commercial system.

Whether it is locally and independently owned or is a member of a chain, the newspaper obtains its news from four sources: (1) one or more of the news distributing agencies; (2) correspondents, either resident in other towns or districts and sending news of their particular locality to the newspaper which employs them, or special correspondents sent from the main office to cover a special story at a distance; (3) material contributed to the paper from outside individuals or organizations; and (4) the regular staff of news gatherers and writers in the local office.

The news agencies, of which there are several, are in effect clearing houses of news gathered from all points and distributed to the newspapers taking the service. Of these, the Associated Press and the United Press are the most important. Dispatches from these sources are credited "A.P." or "U.P." in parenthesis at the beginning of the story; or, on longer stories, they may be credited "By Associated Press (or United Press) Correspondent."

The Associated Press is a co-operative enterprise, in

essence a news exchange. Papers holding Associated Press membership contribute their news to the nearest Associated Press bureau and in return receive news gathered by the bureau from all parts of the world. They are also privileged to ask the Associated Press to check or ascertain further facts on any story occurring outside the paper's own territory, in which it may be interested.

Any paper desiring membership in the Associated Press must receive a favorable vote of the directors and the consent of other member papers in its territory. The directors are elected from among the members and serve without pay. The expense of operation, amounting to $10,000,000 annually, is apportioned among the members according to the importance of their territory. The organization is strictly non-commercial in the sense that there are no profits.

At the beginning of 1930 there were 1280 newspapers holding membership in the Associated Press in the United States. Each of these papers is pledged to furnish all news exclusively to the Associated Press (that is, it is not allowed to furnish reports to any other agency) within a certain radius. The Associated Press is also entitled to receive proofs of all local news stories at its nearest bureau. It maintains bureaus at all important foreign news centers and has a large corps of correspondents engaged in covering stories directly, thus supplementing the coverage obtained from member papers. The Associated Press correspondent is simply a reporter employed by the organization instead of by a particular newspaper. About 1700 persons are employed exclusively by the A.P. in the United States.

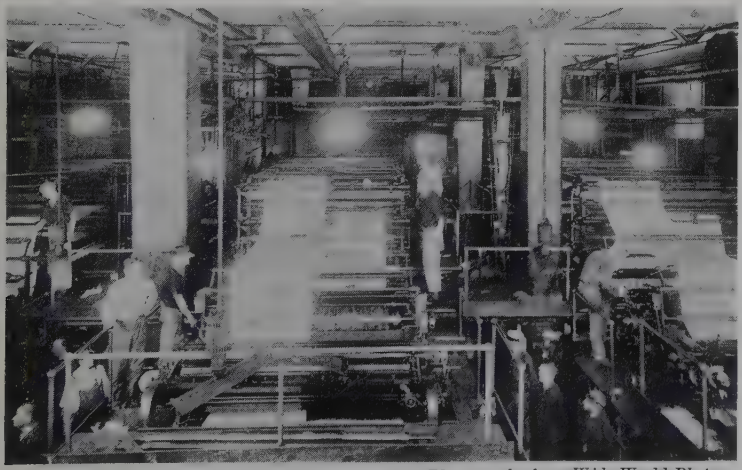
The distribution of news, often amounting to 300,000 words daily, is handled mostly by telegraph. The Associated Press uses 220,000 miles of leased wires and employs 500 telegraphers, as well as using 2,500 automatic telegraph printing machines which deliver the news story directly to

the editorial rooms of the larger papers. The telephone is also used to carry news to the smaller papers, and advance stories and fillers are sent by mail.

This tremendous organization has grown up in less than half a century; for the Associated Press was founded in 1893, with sixty-three members. Up to that time, the distribution of news was on a commercial basis, controlled from New York. Foreign news was available only to such American newspapers as maintained foreign correspondents or was confined to reprints from European papers. Nowadays the Associated Press often carries cable items from 200 foreign points daily. It transmitted the entire text of the latest reparations agreement, amounting to 30,000 words, to the United States for publication by the American newspapers.

It is the strict policy of the Associated Press to send only uncolored facts, without political, racial, or other bias. So stringent has been this rule, that its reports have been criticized as bare and colorless; but recently, especially since the lifting of a former rule against allowing signed stories by A.P. correspondents, some color and vividness have been permitted to creep in, without jeopardizing the cherished principle of impartiality. As an example of A.P. methods of reporting, the presidential campaign of 1928 may be mentioned. During this campaign, three A.P. correspondents, two men and one woman, accompanied the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates wherever they went, and sent daily reports to the executive headquarters in New York. The campaign of the Socialist candidate, Norman Thomas, was also covered in detail.

In addition to its news service, the Associated Press provides a picture service, a feature service, and even fiction serials. The feature service includes about forty pages of printed matter weekly; subjects treated in this service are



Photographs from Wide World Photos

Top — *The New York Times* Telegraph Room
Bottom — *The New York Times* Press-room

editorial, financial, agricultural, dramatic, and scientific in nature. Associated Press correspondents cover the major sporting events throughout the country. Eight wires carry from New York the daily stock market reports of Wall Street to other cities of the continent.

The chief competitor of the Associated Press is the United Press. Its organization differs from that of the Associated Press in that it is commercial in nature, with clients instead of members. It was founded in 1907 by Edward W. Scripps and began with a clientele of 247 afternoon and Sunday papers. The World War, creating an unprecedented demand for foreign news, gave a tremendous impetus to the news agencies, including the United Press. Its service during this period was extended into European countries. In 1919 it also entered the morning field. It now serves 1170 papers in forty-five countries and territories, maintains more than fifty bureaus in the principal news centers of the United States, and uses 110,000 miles of leased wire in North America.

The process of news gathering for the United Press is similar to that of the Associated Press. Aside from its own special correspondents at its established bureaus, its local correspondents are usually members of local newspaper staffs; but no member of the staff of a paper holding Associated Press membership can serve as United Press or other news agency correspondent. In a town which contains only Associated Press newspapers, the United Press correspondent must of necessity be recruited from outside the newspaper ranks.

The Hearst newspapers maintain their own news agencies. The Universal is the Hearst day service, and the night service is called the International. In addition to these is the Consolidated Press service, which deals not with spot news but with features and particularly with financial matter.

A given newspaper is not restricted to the use of one agency; that is, the same newspaper many carry A.P., U.P., and Consolidated dispatches. The Hearst services are also sold to newspapers outside the Hearst ownership, and, on the other hand, many of the Hearst papers also hold Associated Press membership.

The newspaper receives its material from the news agencies in various forms. For the smaller papers a 500-word "pony" is prepared and transmitted by telephone or telegraph. This gives a résumé of the most important events in the day's news. The three leading stories are given in sufficient detail to furnish complete coverage; then follows a brief résumé of the main developments throughout the world. The pony contains an average of eighteen or twenty stories, comprising a balanced ration of international, national, financial, sports, and other news interests.

The city newspaper first receives a "sked" (derived from *schedule*), which is in reality a table of contents indicating what may be expected in the day's developments. This sked contains anywhere from five to fifteen or twenty headings. The early morning news is then given to the afternoon papers. There follows a steady stream of telegraphic news throughout the day; in the larger offices, this is transmitted automatically by telegraph to a mechanical typewriter (sometimes called an "Iron Mike").

Since these telegraphic reports follow the news events chronologically, they must often be given to a rewrite man in the office to organize into a complete, coherent story. This is particularly true of a story in which new developments are breaking hourly or even momently. Moreover, the running story may be broken at any moment by an interpolation marked "Bulletin." A bulletin consists of fifty or seventy-five words giving the high lights of a story requiring prompt release, the additional details to be filled

in later. Often a running story will be interrupted by a bulletin on another subject altogether, giving fresh developments of an old story or breaking a new one, in order that the next edition may be supplied with the latest important developments of the news. A " flash " is an interpolation of a few words whose content is so important that it must be given instant room on the wire. It may be inserted into a running account of the same story or may break into a story on another subject. A flash, for example, would give the result of a big football game or the verdict of an important trial.

Most reports of occurrences at a distance are received from one or more of the news agencies, unless the event is of such local interest or importance that a special correspondent is sent from the newspaper office to the scene of events. The larger papers also maintain permanent correspondents in tributary towns that are too far away to be reached by reporters stationed in the office. These out-of-town correspondents are often reporters on papers in the towns where they live; they send to the paper for which they act as correspondents such news as may be expected to interest its readers, and are paid either a fixed salary or space rates for published material. A special correspondent is often maintained at the state or national capital by the larger papers to cover legislative and general political news. These regular correspondents are under the direction of the state editor, who selects them and supervises their work.

Material offered from outside sources for publication must be very closely censored by the editor lest it fall under the head of propaganda, publicity, or free advertising. Nevertheless, there is a legitimate place for certain classes of contributed material. Often a kindly citizen will bring a news tip to his favorite paper out of sheer friendliness. Club and society news is often brought in. Civic organi-

zations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., the Community Chest, and other organizations of a public or semi-public nature often employ press agents to keep the newspapers informed of their activities by submitting stories or the material for stories to the city editor. It is the province of the editor to decide whether or not they shall be accepted as legitimate news.

The great bulk of the local news is gathered, written, and edited by members of the staff of the newspaper itself. In the cities, morning and evening papers are each issued in a number of editions. As the greater part of the news for a morning paper is written at night and concerns events of the day just past, a somewhat more leisurely development and treatment are possible than on the evening papers, which must often be on the street with an account of events less than an hour after their occurrence. Some of the material for the early editions of the evening paper is written the preceding afternoon; but it is always written "as of" the next day with, if possible, a suggestion of today's (that is, from the writer's point of view at the time of writing, the next day's) developments. The reporter on an evening paper thus finds a very practical application of the proverb, "Coming events cast their shadows before."

Paradoxically enough, the first editions of the morning papers are published in the evening, shortly after the last editions of the evening papers. Editions for mail distribution in outlying towns follow. The paper delivered with the morning milk on the subscriber's doorstep goes to press at two or three o'clock in the morning. Many morning papers follow this with a final or "Six A.M." edition for street sales. The first city edition of the evening paper, on the other hand, is published in the morning and is on the street usually at about nine o'clock. This early edition carries news from the night before, together with new material

ORGANIZATION OF NEWSPAPER DEPARTMENTS

- **PUBLISHER** — Assistant Publisher
  - **Editorial Dept.** — *Managing Ed.* (Assistant)
    - City Editor (Assistant)
      - Reporters
        - Beats; general assignment
        - Re-write men
        - Special departments
        - Feature writers
      - Camera men
      - Artists
    - News Editor
      - Copy desk
      - Telegraph news
    - State Editor
      - Correspondents
    - Magazine Editor
      - Syndicate features
      - Mag. department features
      - Clubs and Society (unless under city editor)
    - Department Editors
      - Drama
      - Music
      - Books
      - Sports
      - Politics
      - "Columns"
    - Librarian
  - **Advertising Dept.** — *Advertising Mgr.* (Assistant)
    - Local
      - Solicitors
    - Promotion
      - Artists
      - Copy writers
      - Mats and Service
    - National
      - Merchandising service
    - Classified
      - Solicitors
      - Counter sales
  - **Business Office** — *Business Mgr.* (Assistant)
    - Building Supt.
      - Cleaners
      - Truck delivery
      - Garage
    - Auditor
      - General books
      - Accounts received
        - Circulation
        - Advertising
      - Accounts payable
    - Multigraphing and Mail
    - Cashier
      - Advertising accounts received
      - Circulation sales
      - Pay roll
    - Purchasing Agent
  - **Mechanical Dept.** — *Mechanical Supt.* (Assistant)
    - Composing room
    - Stereotype
    - Press room
    - Engraving room
    - Garage mechanics
  - **Circulation Dept.** — *Circulation Mgr.* (Assistant)
    - City
      - Street sales
      - District supervisors
        - Carriers
    - Mail room
    - Country
      - Mail
      - Agents

which has appeared in the early morning. From that time on, in the cities, a new edition is published about once an hour, concluding with the " late financial," " final sports," or " final night " edition, which immediately precedes the first edition of the morning papers.

These various editions, of course, are not each composed of entirely new material. Less important stories are pushed out to make room for more important ones. New leads or entire substitute stories are written to keep pace with developments in stories which are carried throughout the day. In theory, although the practice cannot be strictly carried out, material is moved back from page one, from the more important to the less important positions, until the least important stories are finally crowded out at the back door. Thus the reader, between the morning and the evening papers, has literally a round-the-clock news service, by which he may keep himself informed of the world's events hour by hour.

The actual " news " part of the newspaper is prepared in the editorial department, and it is here that our attention will center. But in order to show the entire complex organization of the modern newspaper, of which the editorial force is a part, the chart shown on page 63 has been made as a schematic outline of the personnel organization of the newspaper in all its departments.

EXERCISES

1. What news agencies are used by your local paper?

2. Analyze a copy of your local paper and determine, as far as you can, what stories were contributed by (1) news agencies, (2) outside correspondents, (3) organizations or other outside sources, (4) the local staff.

3. How many editions has your morning paper? Your evening paper? At what hours are they published?

4. If your city is large enough to support several editions a day, get a copy of the first and the last edition of the same day's paper and note the changes. Note which stories are carried throughout the day.

5. Find out whether there is an A. P. or U. P. bureau in your town. If there is, ask the manager to permit the class to visit it.

6. Arrange with a local newspaper proprietor to have the class conducted through the plant, noting the organization of different departments as indicated on the chart.

VI

NEWS ETHICS AND THE PUBLIC

Special problems arise in the general relation between the public and the newspaper as an institution. These problems and the attitude generally adopted toward them have given rise to a conception of newspaper ethics just as the special problems arising in business, law, or medicine have resulted in a more or less stable code of ethical conduct in these occupations.

A good many attempts have been made to draw up formal codes of newspaper ethics, to which editors and owners shall pay official allegiance., But, as a matter of fact, the owner of each newspaper determines its policy on problems of conduct; and there is no penalty for an infringement of generally recognized ethical standards except a loss of confidence on the part of the public, and a consequent loss of circulation. The enforcement of newspaper ethics therefore lies finally in the hands of the public.

A code of ethics may be a mere set of copy-book maxims or it may be an honest statement of policy. The more specific it is, and the less filled with lofty generalities, the more likely it is to represent a real standard and not a mere slogan. One such practical working code has been well expressed by Horace E. Thomas, executive editor of the Portland (Oregon) *Oregonian,* in the following terms:

"The *Oregonian* prints everything that is considered news. It does not play favorites. It believes the public is entitled to know the facts at all times. It subscribes to a code of

journalistic ethics in which there are no class distinctions and no suppressions, except in police cases that affect minors. Our position is that public policy justifies the omission of names of juvenile delinquents. There is an effort to humanize the news and to make words in cold type appeal to the imagination and to the mind without getting into the sob-sister school of sentimentality."

An even briefer practical code is contained in the definition of the " real newspaper " by William H. McMasters: " The real newspaper is an independently owned medium, giving unbiased news to its readers, honest in its editorial opinion, supported by clean advertising, and doing its best to be fair to the public as a whole."

The whole duty of the newspaper to the public is contained in those two words *unbiased news*. That newspaper is discredited which either by intent or by unjustifiable negligence publishes falsehoods in the guise of facts, whether the " fake " news be in furtherance of private interests or in support of a cause of any sort whatsoever. Because of this primary right to unbiased truth, the public demands that a newspaper should not be controlled by special interests unless such control is openly avowed (as in the case of trade journals) even though such ownership be declared to have no effect on news or editorial policy. " Propaganda," according to Marlen Pew, editor of *Editor and Publisher*, " is self service always. News service is public reporting by disinterested people, in fairness to all concerned."

The right of the public to demand that its news shall be veracious and free from control by any private interest has been demonstrated numerous times by congressional investigation. The Denver *Post's* change of attitude toward the Teapot Dome oil lease scandals was the subject of one such formal inquiry; the alleged Mexican documents published in the Hearst papers were also officially investigated

and discovered to be forgeries, although Hearst himself maintained that they were accepted for publication in good faith.

Of a somewhat different character was the Federal Trade Commission's investigation of the purchase by the International Paper and Power Company of stock and bonds in American newspapers in 1919, at a cost of $10,788,700. Archibald B. Graustein, president of the company, insisted that the sole object of the power company was to secure a market for its paper and that the participation of the power company in the ownership of the newspapers would have no effect on news or editorial policy. The ethical position of the power company, however, was weakened by the fact that its name was not listed among the owners in the statement of ownership required of each newspaper. Although the company through its president defended the moral right of both sides to make the transaction, it is significant that the public was to be kept in ignorance of the power company's financial interest in the newspapers concerned.

In this case, public opinion decided squarely against the power company, holding that private financial interests of this character would inevitably influence the policy of the newspapers concerned in a direction favorable to the power company on any issue in which they were involved. Editorial comment of independent newspapers throughout the country agreed that it is absurd to argue that editorial and news policy is not affected by ownership. This contention was summarized by Roy Roberts, managing editor of the Kansas City *Star*, in the following words:

"These investments in newspapers are no ordinary business transactions nor even among the ordinary extensions of business to which the country has become accustomed. They are an invasion of the press of the country for the defi-

nite purpose of controlling public sentiment in favor of power corporations. The assertion of these investors that they are buying newspapers for the purpose of making a market for their paper is mere subterfuge. A disheartening aspect of this revelation is that newspaper owners should so far disregard the true function of the press as to participate in making newspapers subservient to public utility interests. The newspaper that performs its true mission stands between the public and those who would exploit it." [1]

Legally, there was probably no way to prevent the International Paper and Power Company from buying newspapers whose owners were willing to sell, although the law could doubtless have compelled such ownership to be made a matter of public record. But the power of public opinion was so strong that, though both the newspaper owners concerned and the president of the power company continued to protest that the transaction was ethical as well as legitimate, the connection was severed at large financial loss to both parties. The public simply refused to countenance the secret control of any of its press organs by private financial interests. In other words, the public itself enforced for its own protection a section in the code of newspaper ethics.

More dangerous, because more subtle, than any attempt to obtain direct control of the press by private economic interests is the tampering with truth for the purpose of influencing public opinion and arousing its mass emotion in support of social or political causes. The question then arises: If public support is necessary for achieving ends generally considered good and imperative and those ends can be furthered by the inventing or coloring of news, which is then presented to the public as fact, does the end justify the means? If failure to attain these ends is sincerely

[1] *Editor and Publisher,* May 11, 1929.

believed to mean public disaster, does the duty of the press to further this vital cause in every way in its power take precedence over its duty to distinguish clearly between fact, rumor, opinion, and deliberate fabrication?

The World War raised this question on a scale hitherto unprecedented. At the time, the press of all nations generally adopted the attitude that national interest justified the influencing of public opinion by propaganda in the guise of fact. In several respects the ethics of war are in direct contravention of the ethics of peace. The deliberate killing of a human being except in personal self-defense is considered the most serious of all crimes; but the killing of human beings in order to defeat the enemy is the primary purpose of the combatant. If the taking of as many enemy lives as possible is the accepted immediate purpose of war and as such becomes not a crime but a virtue, it may be argued that it is silly quibbling to hold it unjustifiable to help defeat the enemy by telling lies about him.

The situation in actuality was not quite so simple as the foregoing analysis might indicate. Newspaper owners and editors are also human beings. They did not sit in an emotional vacuum, cold-bloodedly manipulating the wires of public feeling. They are themselves a part of the public, and they shared in the emotional stress of their respective nations. Moreover, in the nature of things, many stories which they received could not be subjected to normal methods of check and verification. It should be remembered also that many correspondents performed prodigies of accurate reporting under extremely difficult conditions, often at the risk of their lives.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the public of all nations was led to believe a large number of stories which were later proved and acknowledged to be false. Atrocity stories — the nationalization of women in Russia, the mu-

tilation of Belgian children by German soldiers, and the like — are conspicuous examples. Similar atrocity stories were written, printed, and believed by the press and public of opposing nations.

This extreme use of propaganda took the public unawares. The press had built up public confidence in its veracity, and that confidence led to the ready acceptance of propaganda as fact. But whether or not it can be ethically justified on the ground of national necessity, the success of any lie depends on its acceptance as truth. If it is not believed, it fails of its purpose. And it will be believed only if the person to whom it is told has confidence in the veracity of the person who tells it. Having learned the colossal extent to which it was misled, the thinking section of the public, at least, is now inclined to be skeptical of propaganda masquerading as news. No matter how firmly the mass of the American public may still be opposed to the form of government at present operating in Russia, it no longer swallows the more lurid type of story of Bolshevik atrocities. Indeed, they are no longer extensively printed, because they would no longer be believed.

If the public cares to insist on its right not to be fooled — in other words, if it decides that propaganda in the guise of news is not to its taste — the solution of the problem lies ultimately in its own hands. At present, the more thoughtful portion of the public is inclined to make this demand and to be wary of propaganda. Whether the press during the war made a wise and ethically sound decision or not, it delivered a severe jolt to public confidence, even though it was successful at the time. In the event of another great upheaval of a nature to arouse extreme forms of mass emotion, the same question will arise again. In fact, it is arising continually on a smaller scale.

It must be taken into account that, on subjects arousing

their emotions, large numbers of people are not fooled against their will or because they are unsuspecting. They are inclined to believe what they want to believe, and they welcome every excuse to believe it. If the public demands propaganda for the sake of emotional stimulus, it will get it. If it insists that the truth is good enough, even as a weapon against the wicked, the standard that the press owes no duty higher than its duty to the truth can be and will be upheld.

Propaganda should be carefully distinguished from policy. It is entirely legitimate and indeed inevitable that a newspaper should support one political party or another, should uphold or oppose certain forms of political or social action, and should maintain a conservative or liberal attitude toward general economic questions. It is no more necessary for a newspaper than for a private individual to be without convictions in order to be accurate. A respect for facts is by no means incompatible with the holding of convictions on matters of opinion.

There is room in an honest press for sincere differences of belief, and it is proper that the public should have access to papers representing all shades of opinion, for both sides of every question deserve a fair hearing. In Fascist Italy and in Soviet Russia the government rigidly suppresses all opposition papers. This amounts to propaganda by exclusion. In America, on the contrary, the press is allowed to be the spokesman of the public, or of many publics, instead of the spokesman solely of the government in power. Since the public includes radicals and conservatives, wets and drys, Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists, it is in the American tradition that newspapers should be free to adopt any chosen policy on controversial questions.

The policy of a paper will not only determine its editorial comment, but will influence the amount of space given to

certain types of news. It is impossible to print at equal length everything that occurs, and the basis of selection will be determined to some extent by the general policy of the paper. But the ethics of journalism demand that the sources of news should be critically examined and that the distinction between fact and opinion should be kept clear. Augustus Thomas, president of the World Federation of Education Associations, has summarized the case for the presentation of all varieties of opinion so that the public shall be free to choose, not handed its conclusions ready made by even the most sincere and earnest of leaders, in the following terms: "Propaganda, even though it is for ends believed to be good, is never the whole truth. The rising generation must be presented with the truth from all sides and left free to follow its own convictions; otherwise it will be no better than its ancestors."

It is a fundamental canon of news ethics that the public has a right to demand accuracy in any statement of fact. News must be kept free from wilful distortion, and from misrepresentation arising from negligence in investigating the truth of any report. When fanaticism in any cause, however noble that cause may be, leads a newspaper to overstep the line of legitimate editorial policy to the extent of allowing its news reports to show prejudice, that newspaper will be discredited with all unprejudiced readers and even with the more fair-minded and intelligent adherents of its own views.

It is a fairly simple axiom that the news should contain nothing but the truth. But the question whether the public has the right to demand the whole truth is less simple. Obviously, there are circumstances in which the publication of the whole truth would run counter to other rights of public importance. The slogan of the New York *Times*, "All the news that's fit to print," indicates one accepted ground

for the omission of news material. The widely accepted policy of deleting the names of juvenile delinquents, unless they have committed a major crime, is another instance of omission in the interests of social welfare.

These are well-established principles of news ethics. The real problem arises with the question: At what point does the right of the public to the news supersede the right of the individual to privacy concerning his affairs? It is generally conceded that the individual who has involved himself in occurrences of public record, such as crime, lawsuits, or divorce, must expect to have his privacy invaded so far as the subject thus open to record is concerned. It is also agreed that for news purposes each individual should be considered in terms of news value only, and that the judgment of the editor in printing such news should not be influenced by the financial, social, political, or other influence of the individuals concerned. Such influence for suppression of news, as a matter of fact, is far less potent than it is popularly supposed to be. If the story is real news, and the facts are verified, it is virtually impossible for the individual to bring sufficient pressure to bear to have it suppressed.

The person who for any reason has become a public character pays the penalty when the right of personal privacy conflicts with the right of the public to information concerning news personalities. The newspapers themselves are not primarily responsible for this invasion of privacy; it is due to the circumstances which have made the private affairs of certain persons a matter of public interest, and the insistence of the public that its interest be satisfied. The public character is no longer granted the right to say to the public: "What I do is none of your business."

A striking instance of this collision of rights and interests was brought out in the opposition of Colonel Lindbergh to efforts of the press to obtain information concerning his

personal affairs. Indubitably, Lindbergh had a legal right to make or withhold any statements, interviews, or information he chose. But his refusal to gratify public curiosity did not prevent that curiosity from existing — quite the contrary. If Mrs. Jones wants to know what Mrs. Smith has for dinner, Mrs. Smith may properly resent the question as an impertinence. But when pretty much the whole nation wants to know where its most popular hero went for his honeymoon, the press considers it its business to find out.

The press has no duty whatever to Colonel Lindbergh except the duty not to print falsehoods about him; and even that is a duty not to Lindbergh but to the public served by the news. The press does have a duty to get for the public the news the public wants. In other words, the ethics of journalism concern its relation to the public far more than its relation to individuals. Lindbergh had a right to withhold the news if he could, because he was under no obligation to the public — unless he chose to admit that his position as a popular hero was in itself an obligation. But the press, in this as in every other instance, maintains that, when the right of the individual to privacy conflicts with the right of the public to news, it is the business of the press to get the story.

When the publication of news would work undeserved harm to individuals, the editor is often confronted with a difficult problem in deciding between relative values. Each case must be decided on its own merits. For example, numerous cases of infantile paralysis appeared in a southern city. The health department feared an epidemic. The merchants pleaded that no notice of the situation be taken by the newspapers. They argued that publicity would keep customers out of the stores, would diminish trade, and would result in possible criticism of the health department. Holding that it was the public's right to be warned of danger and

to be informed of precautions necessary to avoid infection, the Roanoke (Va.) *Times and World News* printed the news of the epidemic day by day and urged the public to take measures to control the spread of the disease. It can hardly be disputed that the stand taken by this newspaper, in placing the safety of the public above considerations of possible adverse publicity and economic loss, was both justified and courageous.

In this case, the probability that more serious harm might result from the suppression than from the publication of the news was the deciding factor. Just what consideration should be given to the hardship inflicted on individuals by the publication of a news story depends on the degree of hardship as compared with the news value of the story, or, as in the foregoing instance, with the greater hardship which might be inflicted on others by suppression of the news.

In a large eastern city, an outbreak of typhoid was traced to the restaurant of one of the city's largest department stores. The store was equipped with two water systems, one for drinking, the other for fire tanks and sprinklers. Plumbers, when installing the kitchen sink, carelessly connected it with the tank water-supply, and in this tank the typhoid germs were found. If the department store owner had tried to suppress the story by threatening to withdraw his advertising, it would undoubtedly have been a point of honor with the newspaper to publish the story. But the merchant argued that the public would hold the store guilty because of the mistake of a plumber, for which it was not to blame, and that the business would suffer undeservedly from publication of the story. The owner agreed to compensate the stricken families and to prevent similar mistakes in the future. No danger to public health could result from suppressing the story, since the cause of illness had

already been removed. In this case the editor did not publish the story.

When the publication of a story would cause pain and embarrassment instead of economic loss, a number of factors enter into the editor's decision. If the discomfort caused by publicity is a result of the subject's own actions, undesirable publicity may be considered one of the consequences which he must accept. Painful publicity, however, like other consequences, often falls on the innocent as well as on those directly responsible. Whether such a story should be published, regardless of the feelings of those involved through no fault of their own, depends upon its importance as news. Here again the editor's responsibility to the public is the deciding factor. He must hew to the line of news value, let the chips fall where they may; not because he is hard-hearted and unsympathetic, but because he is under an obligation to give readers the news and not to protect the private interests of individuals who would prefer to have that news suppressed.

Often there is room for difference of opinion as to whether the news value of a story is great enough to require its publication, at whatever cost to individual feelings. For example, on April 8, 1929, Thomas J. Heflin, Jr., son of the senator from Alabama, was reported to have arrived in New York from Panama in an advanced state of intoxication, which he made no effort to conceal from ship news reporters. His father's activities as an advocate of prohibition, which had made him a news personality, gave the story news value even though the young man himself was not an important figure.

Should this story have been published? A series of comments from editors and news agencies, discussing the issue, was printed in *Editor and Publisher* the following week. These comments indicate the general attitude toward this

phase of news ethics. The question is: Should a person of prominence (in this case, Senator Heflin) be penalized by painful publicity arising out of the actions of another person (his son) for which he was not responsible in any way? Taking it from the other side, should a person not in himself prominent, whose actions were not such as would ordinarily have caused public comment, be subjected to painful publicity because of the prominence of his father, for which he was not responsible?

The answer of the majority was that the combination of circumstances gave the story a news value which required its publication. The Heflin story was given liberal front page space in the New York papers and was carried generally throughout the country. The Associated Press, alone among the news agencies, did not carry the story. Kent Cooper, general manager of the Associated Press, gave his reasons as follows:

"The Associated Press . . . does not carry in its reports local cases of intoxication on ship or shore unless the matter of drunkenness is connected with other elements of news. . . . Heflin Jr. has no national prominence except as a son of his father and was not arrested; and I do not conceive that Heflin's father's having national prominence gave reason for the Associated Press to transmit throughout the country the degree of intoxication of his son."

The position of the United Press, which carried the story, was thus stated by Carl A. Groat, day news director: "The persistent openness of young Heflin's actions — and statements so sharply contrasted with the express views of his much publicized father — put the event of his homecoming in the class of legitimate news to which we felt newspapers were entitled."

Frank Mason, president and general manager of the International News Service, took the position that "the story

merely called attention to the actions of a son whose father had adopted a ' brother's keeper ' attitude."

H. H. Stanbury, general manager of Universal Service, declared that " it was one of those stories that are disagreeable for newspapers to handle, but which, because of public interest involved, they must print. . . . Another reason for the justice of the story was the fact that public interest in the prohibition question heightened the reader interest in anything that might happen to such an ardent advocate of the dry laws as Heflin's father."

In general, it may be stated that not the degree of discomfort caused to individuals but the degree of importance as news determines the publication or suppression of a story. The readers of the story, not the actors in it, are the editor's proper consideration. He remembers, as the unwilling subjects of the story do not, that, however furiously they may resent having their affairs made public, they do not resent having the affairs of other persons made public. As readers they would welcome the very same story, if only their own withers were unwrung. Not what the subjects of a news story wish to have printed about themselves, but what the majority of readers wish to read, determines publication.

EXERCISES

1. Formulate a practical working code of ethics for your school or college paper.

2. With the aid of the reference library look up the part played by the Denver *Post* in the Teapot Dome scandals.

3. What is the difference between the power company's buying newspapers to secure a market for their paper and a manufacturer's buying a chain of retail stores to secure a market for his product? Explain fully.

4. Was press propaganda during the World War justifiable on

both sides? Was it justifiable for the Allies but not for Germany? Uphold your position.

5. Do you think press propaganda would be equally successful in the event of another war? Give reasons.

6. Explain the difference between propaganda and policy. Should a paper whose policy favors prohibition refuse to print prohibition propaganda as news? How would the distinction be made?

7. Was Lindbergh's refusal to discuss any subject except aviation in press interviews justified? Was it wise? Was the press justified in going after the information concerning his personal affairs regardless of his opposition?

8. What would be your own judgment on printing the Heflin story? Defend your position.

9. Suppose a college measure is being considered, banning student automobiles from the campus. Your student paper is for (or against) the measure. How may the paper properly support its policy on the question? What methods should it avoid?

VII

ETHICS AND ADVERTISING

It is a frequent assumption that the news and editorial policy of the press is virtually bought and controlled by the financial pressure of its advertisers. Since the chief revenue of the newspaper comes from its advertisements, the inference is drawn that the advertisers are in a position to dictate, and that they use their power by threatening to withdraw their custom unless their interests are considered paramount. Such reasoning overlooks two factors: that the independence of the press is of immensely greater value to its owners than is any advertising contract; and that, since advertising interests themselves are not united, no concerted pressure can be brought to bear on any newspaper. The advertiser receives value for his expenditure by the circulation of his advertisement to the newspaper readers. If advertising is profitable, as it is admitted to be, then the withdrawal of advertising would hurt the advertiser himself and would thus be a self-destructive threat.

This common criticism of the press has been stated by Andrè Siegfried in his book *America's Coming of Age* in the following terms:

"The great newspapers, as every one knows, live entirely by their advertising. Logically, therefore, they are bound to fall sooner or later under the influence of high finance and big business which pays for publicity. . . . The national interests thus possess an effective means of moulding the public to their ends by withholding what they think it

should not know and presenting each subject from the desired angle. A rigid code is soon built up from which there is no escape, though people are unaware of its existence."

Siegfried's logic is based on an imperfect knowledge of the facts. National advertising constitutes an average of one-fifth to one-sixth of the total advertising in the newspaper; the rest comes from various local sources. "High finance and big business" representing "national interests" therefore could not conceivably influence more than a small proportion of the advertising revenue of the paper. A newspaper is in itself, moreover, a big business enterprise. It is no more dependent on its advertisers than its advertisers are dependent on it for prosperity. If a paper has the requisite quality and quantity of circulation, advertisers will use it as a medium because it is profitable to do so, regardless of news and editorial policy.

Direct answers to Siegfried's accusation were made by a number of leading American newspaper publishers and editors.[1] Adolph S. Ochs, publisher of the New York *Times*, characterized Siegfried's statement as "a general and sweeping charge against the freest and most independent press in the world today — an indictment completely untrue and based upon the wildest assumptions of men who believe only what they want to believe."

Charles H. Dennis, editor of the Chicago *Daily News*, made the point that "newspapers furnish their advertisers a service of great value, and that service is obtained on a fair commercial basis, simply and solely because it is a valuable service. Any intelligent advertiser knows that the value of a newspaper as an advertising medium would be enormously injured if its intelligent readers had any just cause to suspect it of being a sordid falsifier or a time-server cringing before its advertisers." To this, M. E. Tracy, of

[1] *World's Press News*, London, August 8, 1929.

the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, added the argument that "even if advertisers wanted to influence newspapers, they could not do so, because they could not agree among themselves. The only common interest they have in newspapers, the only cause that ever finds them united, is the linage rate."

Frank Knox, general manager of the Hearst newspapers, declared: "I do not know of a single editor of standing connected with a great newspaper, who would permit, for one instant, any advertiser, no matter how big, to dictate his editorial policy. Newspapers have become, it is true, great commercial enterprises, but with their initial resources they have become less, instead of more, subservient to outside financial influence."

The publisher and editor of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* pointed out that self-interest alone would prevent advertisers from attempting to exercise control over the newspapers of which they are the customers. "To a newspaper man," he wrote, "M. Siegfried's charges are preposterous. I refer those who doubt this statement to the large advertisers of the country. These advertisers know that they could not influence the American press if they would; and that they would not if they could. Advertisers know that a press without public confidence soon dies, and that an advertising medium without public confidence is worthless not only to the public it betrays but to the advertiser as well."

The statements of these and other editors and publishers are based on both reason and fact. The charge that news and editorial policy are dictated by either national or local advertisers is founded on ignorance of conditions. Not only responsibility to the public but self interest on the part of both publisher and advertiser have established the independence of the press.

The relation of advertising to news nevertheless presents a real and pressing problem — the problem of advertising disguised as news for the purpose of deceiving both the editor and the public. The only proper place in a newspaper for the promotion of any private interests is the space devoted to paid advertising. The press agent or publicity writer or counsel in public relations, as he is variously called, is hired by individuals, corporations, or organizations to camouflage special pleading for his employer's interests so that it may pass, not as advertising, which must be paid for, but as news which is given free space. From the newspaper point of view, he is trying to get something of recognized commercial value without paying for it.

One of the most noted and successful publicity experts, Ivy Lee, press agent for the Rockefeller interests, the Pennsylvania railroad, and other large corporations, has himself drawn the distinction between news and advertising in the following definition: " News is that for which the people are willing to pay to have brought to their attention, while advertising is that for which the advertiser himself must pay to get to the people's attention." Following this definition a point further, free publicity is that for which the advertiser succeeds in making the people pay without their knowledge or consent. Even more directly, the newspaper is paying when it gives for nothing space for which it should receive payment.

Publicity disguised as news is thus essentially a double trickery — of the newspaper and of the public. As J. F. Cramer, president of the California Newspaper Publishers' Association, puts it: " Newspapers are universally recognizing that the free publicity seeker is in a class with the second story artists who seek to take from a newspaper something which rightfully belongs in its cash register." But the cheating does not stop with this economic consideration. It

is the editor's business not only to see that advertising interests should not get what they do not pay for but that the readers should be safeguarded against paying for news and receiving concealed advertising. "Newspaper readers expect," says the editor of *Editor and Publisher,* "and have a right to expect, disinterested and strictly honest reporting in news columns, not the writing of persons paid by outside interests to gain public opinion for or against individuals or causes."

This deception of the reader is far more important than the economic ground of the newspaper's opposition to free publicity. Often the corporations or other business interests are of such magnitude that they are not primarily interested in trying to filch money from the newspaper's cash register. The real point is, that, if their interests can be placed before the public as a disinterested reporting of news instead of as advertising, the influence on the reader will naturally be much greater. The resulting material is not merely something that is not paid for, but something of immensely greater psychological and hence financial value than could possibly be obtained by paying for it. If the source of this material were openly acknowledged, so that the material itself would be recognized by the reader as information presented to him from this source, there would be nothing unethical in the procedure. The only objection in that case would be the commercial one on the part of the newspaper owner and his representative, the editor, who would then merely have to decide whether the publicity should be classed as news to be inserted without charge or as advertising to be paid for. There is nothing unethical in hiring a lawyer to present the case of a client in court, for the purpose of attempting to convince the public (in this instance, the jury) of the validity of the client's claims. The ethical question arises when the lawyer, or publicity agent, does

not admit to the jury, or public, that he represents a client's interests, but poses as an impartial judge.

Press agentry and propaganda are closely related forms of misuse of the news. They are often difficult to detect, because the distinction between news and publicity is not always apparent in the substance of the purported news material, but depends on the motive or purpose behind it. The purpose of publicity and propaganda is not to give the public unbiased information, but to influence it in behalf of persons, organizations, or causes. News is properly an end in itself; the press agent uses news as a means to an end.

When Harry F. Sinclair completed the jail term to which he was sentenced in connection with the investigation of the Teapot Dome oil lease scandals, he sent out a prepared statement of self-justification to the newspapers. Sinclair's release was news, and it was to be expected that a statement from him would be published in the form of an interview with press representatives. How did his formal statement differ from such a news interview? The statement falls under the head of publicity because it was not prepared by an unprejudiced writer who had asked his own questions and formed his own judgment as to the facts. What Sinclair had to say was news, not publicity, only if it was obtained and recorded by impartial reporters instead of being a self-serving statement in Sinclair's behalf, containing exactly what he wanted it to contain.

The "Golden Jubilee," honoring Thomas A. Edison and celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the incandescent light, culminating in the selection by competitive examination of a high school boy to receive a scientific education as Edison's protégé, was given liberal news space throughout the country. Edison is himself a news personality, and other news personalities, including the President of the United States and Henry Ford, took part in the event. The

scientific competition had novelty, a strong contest interest, and an educational or culture interest. Yet the entire performance turned out to be a mammoth publicity stunt in behalf of the electric light and power interests. Edward F. Bernays, who directed the celebration, has since used his success in crashing the news columns as an argument to advertising agents whose clients might have anniversaries which they would be glad to celebrate with a birthday present of thousands of dollars' worth of free advertising in sections of the newspaper which are not commonly open to advertising.

Bernays' circular letter reads as follows: "Will any of your clients celebrate important anniversaries in 1930? The remarkable tide of good will created by Light's Golden Jubilee celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the incandescent lamp proves that occasions of this kind can be made to capitalize the past and to focus public attention on the present and the future. If our experience in handling the public relations aspects in the Light's Golden Jubilee and other clients interests you, we should be glad to discuss with you the anniversary possibilities of your clients. Obviously, efforts of this kind supplement your own advertising efforts."

What should the newspaper editors have done in this instance? Some of them were unsuspecting, others were not. They did give away space to which Mr. Bernays' client was not entitled. On the other hand, the Golden Jubilee material was so cleverly based on sound news values that, if the readers themselves had been asked to make the decision, they would probably have asked to be given the entertainment they derived from the stories. Moreover, the boys who competed in the examination were actuated by a genuine interest in obtaining an education and not in promoting Edison's commercial projects. Before criticizing the news-

papers for their action in accepting this publicity as news, one should remember that such issues are really confusing.

William B. Shearer attended the naval limitations parley at Geneva in 1927, supposedly as a disinterested technical expert and press representative, although he was in reality secretly employed by a combination of ship-building firms with a financial interest in promoting a large navy. In this case the ethical issue is clear. Shearer pretended to speak purely on the grounds of special technical knowledge, as one interested solely in the facts wherever they might lead, whereas he was actually the spokesman of the Newport News Ship-building and Dry Dock Corporation, the New York Ship-building Corporation, and the Bethlehem Ship-building Corporation. Needless to say, if his concealed status as an employee of the ship-building firms had been discovered, his articles and statements would not have been accepted by the press as disinterested observations. When Shearer fell out with his employers and revealed the deception in 1929, his contract to write articles for a great American newspaper was instantly canceled. No newspaper, whatever its own policy on naval questions, would fail to denounce the immorality of the action taken by Shearer and his employers nor to regret that the press, and through the press the public, was unscrupulously victimized. Here again the public, through a congressional investigation, manifested its concern that its news should be uncontaminated. The exposure of Shearer may serve to put both the public and the press on guard against similar occurrences.

The cruder forms of free advertising, in which the advertiser demanded a news story as a condition of placing an advertising contract, have waned almost to the vanishing point. On both ethical and economic grounds, editor and advertiser no longer join forces to deceive the reader. The

publicity writer, in order to succeed, must disguise his material so cleverly that he deceives the editor into believing that he is getting *bona fide* news.

In this battle of wits, the publicity seeker has become increasingly skilful and the editor increasingly wary. Since June, 1929, an experienced newspaper man has been employed full time by the Newspaper Publishers' Association of New York for the sole purpose of discovering publicity material masquerading as news, and his warnings are sent out in the form of bulletins to the newspaper editors.

The line between publicity and news is often hard to draw. In the first place, business concerns are legitimate subjects of real news. The United Press Manual thus analyzes the difficulty of making the distinction: " The reporter is confronted on one side by the complaint of certain editors that anything he says about the manufacturer is free advertising for the product of that manufacturer, no matter how big or prominent a man the manufacturer may be in the eyes of the country or the world. On the other hand that same group of editors is more than likely to devote columns of space to a subject which is free advertising in a way for something else.

" After all, anything written about any person or thing is in a sense advertising. Every time the President of the United States stands before a group of correspondents in the White House and tells them the accomplishments of his administration, he is putting out a big advertisement and obtaining a tremendous amount of free space on behalf of his particular political party.

" By and large, the skilled reporter and the careful editor have little difficulty in drawing a dividing line where straightaway news interest in the man or subjects ends and straightaway advertising for that man or subject begins.

There is no guiding rule, however, except intelligence for making out this theoretical line."

Although much publicity comes in written form directly to the editor, the reporter also must have a clear idea of the relation between news and advertising. Obviously, the names of stores, of trademarked products, and of commercial companies are excluded from news stories unless the name is a vital element in the news. On the other hand, if a bank bandit escaped in a Buick car, no editor would lessen the chance of the bandit's capture for fear of advertising the Buick as a good reliable car for fleeing bank bandits. The names of commercial aviation companies are ordinarily omitted; but when the Transcontinental Air Transport liner *City of San Francisco* was lost, the name of the company was obviously part of the story. In the former example, the company mentioned had nothing to gain, and in the latter instance the effect of the publicity given the name was inevitably unfavorable. On the other hand news may be favorable to commercial interests without ceasing to be news, and its suppression would be unfair to the readers. Obviously, the story of a bank merger could not be written without reference to the names of the banks.

One editor has given the touchstone: "If some one wants to get a story into the paper — that's advertising; if he wants to keep the story out of the paper — then it's news." Certain types of publicity stories are nevertheless admitted to the news columns. Free publicity is customarily given to public and semi-public enterprises, such as the Red Cross, the Community Chest, churches, civic and similar organizations, and educational institutions. Such publicity is admitted, first, on the ground that these enterprises are not run for private profit; second, that they have a bearing on public interest and public welfare; and, most important of all, that no deception is involved, for the source and purpose

of the publicity are frankly admitted. The real interests to be safeguarded are those of the reader. The question to be answered in each case is: If the reader were informed of the source and real subject of the story, would he still be willing to pay for it as news?

It is the business of the newspaper to protect its readers not only from fraudulent news but from fraudulent or harmful advertisements. Not everything can be printed in the paper for which an advertiser is willing to pay. Practically all newspapers at the present time ban certain types of advertising as unethical. Among those most frequently excluded are " blind " ads addressed to girls or young women without experience; schools which carry an " earn as you learn " offer or promise positions or a definite salary on completion of the course; and advertisements of spiritualists, clairvoyants, palmists, and the like. As a step toward establishing a uniform standard of ethics in advertising, the Association of Newspaper Classified Advertising Managers, representing eighty-six papers, in July, 1929, adopted a code of censorship of advertisements, governing its members.

The New York *Times* code is typical. The *Times,* in addition to excluding improper advertisements whenever they are detected, offers $100 reward to any one causing the arrest and conviction of any one obtaining money under false pretenses through fraudulent advertisements published in the *Times.* The main types of advertisement excluded by this code may be summarized as follows:

1. Fraudulent financial advertisements. (Bogus or wildcat companies offering stock to investors.)

2. Offers of something for nothing.

3. Ambiguous or misleading advertisements, promising high earnings to inexperienced workers.

4. Attacks on competitors or their goods.

5. Advertisements guaranteeing large dividends or excessive profits.

6. Bucket shop advertisements and the offering of financial " prospects."

7. Indecent, vulgar, suggestive, repulsive, or offensive advertisements.

8. Matrimonial advertisements.

9. Fortune telling and similar advertisements.

10. Medical advertisements which offer free treatment or make unjustifiable claims of cure. (In the Chicago *Tribune* the word *cure* is not allowed to appear in medical advertisements).

11. Advertisements of products containing habit-forming or dangerous drugs.

12. Want ads requesting money for samples.

13. Mailing lists offered for sale.

14. Any other advertisements that may cause money loss to the reader, injury in health or morals, or loss of confidence in reputable advertising and honest business.

This list, with minor variations, would apply to most American newspapers. The press has accepted, as part of its responsibility to the public, the duty of protecting its readers from advertisements which are misleading or subversive of public welfare.

EXERCISES

1. What opportunities might there be for publicity disguised as news in your student paper?

2. What is your own judgment on the news space given to the Edison Jubilee?

3. With the aid of the reference department of the public library, look up the Shearer case.

4. Interview the advertising manager of your local newspaper on the types of advertisement barred from the paper.

Part Two

NEWSPAPER WORK

VIII

THE REPORTER

The work of gathering and writing local news is centralized in the "local room" of the newspaper and is in the hands of a staff of reporters under the direction of the city editor.

Getting a story and writing it are in reality two different activities. Often the facts assembled in one story have been gathered from a number of different sources. Several reporters may have worked on it from various angles, and in addition the press services may have been called upon to verify or develop aspects of the story connected with other communities.

The staff of the paper includes rewrite men, who may do all their work inside the office, receiving the facts by telephone, telegraph, or a reporter's notes, assisted at times by clippings from the newspaper library or "morgue," and from this material assembling the complete story of events which they have not seen. At the opposite extreme are men who have the ability to find the news at its source but who may not themselves write a single paragraph. This division of labor, however, is by no means sharply maintained. In general practice, the reporter must be able to write a story from a telephoned or telegraphed report and must also on occasion telephone his own findings so clearly and succinctly that the man in the office can weave them into a complete story; or he may be called upon to telephone his story verbatim directly to a typist.

Most frequently of all, except on some of the large metropolitan papers, the reporter will first go out and get the story and then write it when he has returned to the office. The rewrite man who cannot himself get the news but can take a few bare facts over the telephone and weave them into a vivid and well organized story, and the man with a genius for digging up news but without the ability to write the story after he has obtained it, are limited specialists. Their opportunities for getting and holding places in the newspaper world are restricted by their limitations. Moreover, a complete differentiation between the news gatherer and the news writer is not desirable; for one writes most vividly and interestingly of what one has seen or knows at first hand.

It is impossible to know in advance where all the news stories of the day are coming from. But there are certain routine sources of news known as " beats." The reporter on a beat is responsible for finding and reporting anything of news interest in his territory. A reporter assigned to the court house covers criminal trials, civil suits, divorces, and other matters of public record. The police reporter checks with the various police stations, the coroner's office, and police courts for news pertaining to these offices. The city council, local departments, and officials furnish another regular source of news. If there is a college or university in the town, its activities are usually reported by a regular campus correspondent. In seaports, a reporter is assigned to cover shipping news. Hotels, special districts, and suburbs of the city are also in charge of " beat " men. These reporters are not only expected to inform the office of all items of regular news value, but they also establish friendly relations with individuals in their territory who are in a position to give them advance or current information in the form of news tips.

Not all the news, however, can be apportioned among the various beats; for the essence of much of the best news lies in its unexpectedness. The staff therefore, in addition to men or women covering a prescribed territory, includes a number of reporters on general assignment. That is, they are sent out by the city editor to cover whatever stories may arise, without knowing in advance whether the day will bring forth a fire, a convention, a homicide, an interview with a visiting statesman or moving picture star, a cat show, the dedication of a building, a bank robbery, or a picnic of the League of Red-Headed Men.

The staff also often includes a special type of general-assignment reporter known in newspaper jargon as a "trained seal." The trained seal is a writer with a special gift for writing feature stories or putting color, human interest, and dramatic vividness into news stories. The feature writer must be capable of turning out a straight news story; that is, he must share the general reporter's passion for acquiring and selecting facts, including the important minutiæ of initials, addresses, and similar details. But he has something of the fiction writer's ability to give to a story of fact the qualities of dramatic, picturesque, humorous, or emotional significance. Sometimes the feature writer selects incidents of his own discovery, which, except for his treatment of them, would be too insignificant to rank as news. Sometimes he covers news events which in themselves have a striking dramatic or emotional character. Sometimes he is sent as special correspondent to write color stories of important events which, so far as the bare facts are concerned, are recorded in a separate straight news story.

The city editor sits like a spider in the middle of the web of news, receiving the raw material of stories from many different sources — individuals, organizations, correspond-

ents, and beat men — and apportioning them to reporters for further investigation and eventual transformation into finished news stories.

In order to fulfill the exacting and variegated demands of his occupation, the good reporter must be a "specialist in things in general" and in addition must have some specialized qualifications of his own. It is far from sufficient that he have the idea that life on a newspaper would be interesting or that he have a certain taste for literary expression. One editor suggests that all candidates for newspaper work should first be weeded out by means of a personality test; for it is not always the person with the most brilliant intellect or the most genuine talent for writing who makes the best reporter. The brilliant person may be shy or unobservant or careless of detail or opinionated or slow or the possessor of a single-track mind which cannot readily shift from one subject to another.

A talent for writing is a valuable asset to the reporter. But, on the other hand, any person of sufficient intelligence and education can learn to write passably, even competently, while the literary genius may be wholly lacking in other and essential qualifications of the good reporter. The "nose for news," like the ability to write acceptably, is often regarded as a special and mysterious gift whose possessors are born, not made; but it is less mysterious than it sounds. A nose for news is simply the faculty of keen observation, compounded with a trained knowledge of the factors which make for interest and hence for news value. The recognition of a potential story also depends upon a sound acquaintance with the character of the reporter's particular newspaper and the preferences of his city editor. Some editors, for example, place a higher value than others on the obtaining of diaries or letters written by the principals in a story that is being "played up." In general, a nose for

news may be reduced to the prosaic qualities of patience and persistence in digging out facts.

Not all good reporters conform to the same rigid pattern of personality any more than all lawyers, doctors, or business men are of the same type. But there are certain traits which characterize the successful reporter. The most fundamental of these is objectivity. The introspective person has his inward eye focused upon himself; but the reporter's attention must be concentrated on the world beyond himself, for important aspects of his momentary slice of that world will escape him if he is "thinking of his thoughts and feeling of his feelings." To the newspaper man at work, "the story's the thing." As a psychiatrist once put it, the reporter is an extrovert; that is, he naturally looks outward rather than inward, finding his keenest realization of experience in others rather than in himself.

This does not mean that the reporter lacks sympathy and emotion. In fact, sympathy, or the ability to put oneself imaginatively in the place of another person, is of the greatest practical advantage both in getting and understanding or interpreting facts concerning human beings — and all news concerns human beings. But the reporter on the job must maintain a certain balance or impersonality, which is often mistaken for callousness or cynicism. He must control his own emotional reactions instead of being overwhelmed by them. For the sake of the story, which demands above all else a clear grasp of the facts, he cannot afford to be overcome or submerged by pathos, horror, or confusion. It may be of the greatest importance for him to realize and be able to convey how some one else feels; but the good reporter is aware that how he himself feels is not of the slightest interest to the public.

Herein lies a crucial difference between sympathy and sentimentality. Sympathy is the identification of oneself

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with another object; sentimentality, on the contrary, consists in reveling in the consciousness of one's own emotions. In practice, the reporter learns to face the most harrowing, confusing, tragic, or perilous situations with no other immediate feeling than a certain nervous tension of excitement. It is his business to observe, not to feel, and his entire consciousness is directed toward this effort of observation. His job is to get the story, not to have the story " get him." If his personal reactions are allowed to obscure his field of vision, he is almost certain to " let his paper down " by failing to ascertain completely and to organize clearly the facts — and letting the paper down is the Unpardonable Sin of newspaperdom.

The reporter is also required to have courage — sometimes physical courage but more often courage of a subtler sort. He must be immune to snobbery, which is a form of cowardice. The king and the cat to him have only one reason for existence — as sources of news. He is no respecter of persons, which means that he is equally a respecter of all persons and regards the criminal in the dock and the millionaire on his private yacht equally as human beings. This is the firm basis of the tact, the self-respect, and the respect for his job which are necessary to getting the best results from all human contacts. It should not be forgotten that tact is precisely as important in approaching the jail-bird as the visiting magnate. In fact, the jail-bird may have much the bigger news story under his hat and require more careful persuasion to divulge it.

The most frequent test of the reporter's courage is the threat of making him lose his job or otherwise penalizing him for doing what he has been sent out to do. Any loss of temper, bullying, or discourtesy may rightly be reported against him. But if he has been sent out to get the story, nothing short of physical impossibility will keep him from

doing his utmost to get it; and he may confidently rely on his city editor's support of his efforts to obey orders. The fable is told of a reporter who telephoned his office that the man he had been told to interview had thrown him out of the house and had threatened more violent treatment if he returned.

"Go back," barked the city editor, "and tell him he can't intimidate *me!*"

A well-grounded courage and self-respect naturally bring with them courtesy and tact. A reporter must often be persistent beyond the limits of ordinary social good manners, for such persistence is a part of his job; but only the person who is unsure of himself resorts to bluster.

There is a type of reporter who engages in sharp practice and chicanery to attain his immediate ends, just as there are shysters in the legal profession; but this reporter, like the shyster lawyer, is pursuing a short-sighted policy. A reporter has to cover not just one story but many stories. A reputation for reliability and keeping his word will in the end win a dozen scoops for one that it loses, and it is more likely than not to win even that one. For the reporter who relies on scrupulously honorable methods will work all the harder to make those methods prevail.

The reporter with a high reputation for honor will often be given confidential information which would otherwise be unobtainable. Perhaps the information cannot be divulged immediately but will be extremely useful later on; perhaps, because of the confidence placed in him, he will be given a valuable background of facts and trusted not to reveal certain portions of it, whereas without that confidence he would be told nothing at all. He can thus build up a group of valuable news sources which are inaccessible to his less trustworthy confrères.

For this reason the reporter should be very careful to make

no promises which he cannot fulfill. It is not in his province to promise to suppress a story, and in no circumstances should he promise that only one side will be printed. Any one with an ounce of common sense knows that a promise of partisanship must be insincere, and almost every one can be brought to appreciate an attitude of real fairness to all concerned.

In addition to an objective attitude, courage, tact, courtesy, and truthfulness, the good reporter has a real zest for his job, which makes it for the time being the most interesting thing in the world to him. There is no place on a newspaper staff for the blasé and the bored. It is in the nature of newspaper work that its hours should be determined on occasion not by the clock but by events. The poet might well have had reporters in mind when he wrote: "We live by heart beats, not by moments on the dial."

For example, when the lost airplane *City of San Francisco* after days of frantic search was discovered on the uninhabited slope of Mount Taylor, New Mexico, in September, 1929, newspaper men swarmed up the mountain side, suffering cold, exposure, and fatigue, hunger and loss of sleep. The person to whom such an uncomfortable experience appeals as an enviable adventure has one of the elements of a good newspaper man. The person who does not like to get his feet wet or to skip his meals, who resents being called out of bed in the middle of the night, or who declines to stay on the job after the whistle blows had better seek some other career. The temperament that values order and routine in life has its uses; but the man whom the city editor loves has an enthusiasm and a perseverance that is oblivious of time-clocks.

The foregoing qualities are of most value in getting the news. Three others are essential to writing the news after it is obtained: speed, accuracy, and adaptability. The news

writer has to work against time with a " dead line " looming up before him. He must therefore be able to organize his material, not only logically and coherently, but rapidly; and he must learn to choose the words which best express his meaning without expending too much time on the choice of terms. He must be able to write directly from his mind to the typewriter without fumbling, for he will seldom have the opportunity for revision. The ability to think quickly and clearly, which lies behind the ability to write quickly and clearly, is in part a matter of temperament; but it is also capable of cultivation and improves with practice.

Although the news writer cannot afford to be slow, he must nevertheless be sure. Accuracy is the first law of the local room. No one else has time to go back over the ground covered by the reporter and check his facts. A mistake may have serious consequences: loss of faith and good will on the part of the public; the necessity of a humiliating correction or retraction on the part of the paper; or even an expensive libel suit. The reporter is held absolutely responsible for getting his facts accurately, for understanding them correctly, and for presenting them without exaggeration or misconstruction.

This demand for accuracy extends to the smallest details. In fact, one major mistake may be forgiven more readily than habitual carelessness in apparently trivial matters. There is no valid excuse for misspelling proper names, using the wrong initials, or giving an incorrect street address. Human vanity has no more nearly universal demonstration than the resentment of a man or woman whose name has been garbled. Moreover, names, initials, and addresses may be needed for reference at some later date; and a printed mistake in these particulars may result in confusion and the loss of much precious time.

No one is so likely as the inexperienced writer to look

upon his copy as a spiritual brain-child whose honor must be defended against the insult of the blue pencil. Some writers, having developed a story from a particular point of view, are constitutionally incapable of rewriting it in a different fashion in accordance with the ideas of the city editor. But these are by no means the "stars" — they are far more likely to be the "cubs." It is not a mark of strength, but of weakness, to be incapable of accepting and profiting by correction.

The good reporter is both able and willing to rewrite a story from a different angle if required to do so. City editors often have inspirations of their own, and the inspirations are frequently good ones; that is why their possessors have become city editors. If the reporter is convinced that the city editor is trying to make him spoil his story, then let him spoil it. What goes into the paper is the editor's direct and personal responsibility, and even if he is wrong his should be the final word. The chances are that he is right, anyway.

The beginner may feel that his originality is being cramped and his masterpieces murdered by the editorial blue pencil. Nevertheless, it remains as true now as it was in the time of Pope that "those move easiest who have learned to dance." Real originality is not killed but strengthened by discipline; it is wise not to try to interpret a concerto before you have mastered scales. There is a scope for genuine originality within the necessary limitations of news writing, and the good city editor encourages it. But ordinary competence along the beaten track comes before experiment in the blazing of new trails. Before the young reporter decides that his writing is too good to be appreciated by his stolid superiors, he might well give due weight to the possibility that it is not good enough.

The term *newspaper man* has been used throughout in

a sense which includes both men and women. The qualifications of the newspaper woman, as of women in other vocations, are approximating ever more closely to those of men in the same field. The assignments given them are the same as those given to men. There are women on the police beat, women aviation editors, women covering courts and other beats, as well as women feature writers and women on general assignment.

The special " Women's Page " of the newspaper is gradually giving place to the more general " Magazine Section " as women cease to confine themselves to recognizable specific interests and activities. Women readers today are quite as likely as men to turn eagerly to the sports pages or the financial news. In consequence, the woman's angle or feminine point of view in handling stories supposed to be of a special interest to women is merged in the general domain of human interest. As a result of this change in the world at large, the sob sister, once a generic term for the newspaper woman, has become practically an extinct species. Sob stuff — a deliberately sentimental overplay of the emotional aspects of a story — is still sometimes written and printed, but it is quite as likely to be written by men as by women. The modern generation of newspaper women are no longer sob sisters. As one editor puts it, they are " women newspaper men."

There is a rather general opinion that women have an initial advantage in going after certain types of stories and a disadvantage in others. Experience, however, does not confirm this belief. A woman is sometimes under a slight initial handicap in working on a story of a kind which only men are expected to handle. But that handicap is readily overcome by a complete absence of self-consciousness, which leads others very quickly to forget that they are dealing with a woman and to recognize her simply as a repre-

sentative of the press. On the other hand, there is no type of story to which a man with the gift of appearing sympathetic cannot gain access as readily as a woman. In fact, while some women are more at ease with another woman, others confide more readily in a man, provided he does not approach them with a "hard boiled," bullying attitude, than in one of their own sex. Men who are resentful, embarrassed, or sex-conscious in the presence of a woman reporter invariably respond to the impersonal attitude whereby the "woman newspaper man" sinks herself in her job.

The problems and qualifications of the newspaper woman are the same as those of the newspaper man, with a few added precautions. A newspaper local room is less formal and more personal in its atmosphere than is the ordinary business office. But once in action, it becomes the most impersonal spot on earth. It is no handicap for a woman reporter to be a lady; but she must not expect the city editor to remember that she is one when he is hurrying to "make" an edition. If he feels called upon to keep the sex of his staff members constantly on his mind, he will refuse to submit to the additional strain and will make up his mind that he prefers not to hire women on his staff.

Women, by long continued training and social tradition, have a tendency to be more personal in their attitude toward their work than are men. Such an attitude is a decided handicap. The "woman newspaper man" accepts reproof and correction as applying to the work, not to the worker. She leaves her personal affairs behind her when she begins her working day. She would rather fall in her tracks than shed a tear in the presence of others. She bears her share in the give-and-take of the office and neither expects nor accepts any favors or privileges based upon sex. She dresses simply and sensibly, for she never knows whether

she will have to stand in the rain outside a house where the police are making an arrest or attend a luncheon in honor of a prince or a college president before the day is over.

There is still a certain prejudice in newspaper offices against accepting women on a par with men — a prejudice which only women themselves can overcome. This prejudice rests on a certain lingering self-consciousness on both sides. Women for many generations were brought up with the idea, based on the limitations of their opportunities, that personal charm is their highroad to success. Personal charm, in men and equally in women, is a valuable asset in any walk of life. But charm is no substitute for competence. In fact, the newspaper woman must learn quickly and thoroughly that there is absolutely *no* substitute for competence.

Self-consciousness sometimes leads her to adopt one or another of two equally mistaken poses. On the one hand, she may act as if it is rather amusing to make mistakes, sure that all will be forgiven if she makes an attractive picture to the eye. But no city editor wants a siren in his office; he is not hiring sirens but reporters. On the other hand, in her effort to be "one of the boys," she may go to the other extreme and cover her lack of ease, her latent fear of being considered inferior, with the appearance of aggressive masculinity. But if she adopts no affectation at all and thinks simply of her work instead of the personal impression she is making on others — if, in short, she is just a person among other persons during business hours, she will find herself accepted without question or discomfort on her own terms.

On account of the lingering prejudice just mentioned, it is still somewhat harder for a young woman than for a young man to obtain her first opening in newspaper work. Her competence is less readily taken for granted, and she still

has to prove that she has not some of the "professionally feminine" attributes which make many editors hesitate to employ women. To offset this disability, there are certain opportunities which are particularly open to her. Chief among these are the society and club departments and the Children's Magazine. Women today take part in so many sports that there is often an opening for a woman sports writer. The column of advice on personal problems is practically always conducted by an experienced woman, but she may have need of a young assistant.

The young woman who prefers general assignment work and who has gained her entrance to the office force through one or another of the foregoing departments is in an excellent position to offer feature stories, interviews, or news stories of her own discovery to the city desk. If she has ability, it will be recognized. She will then be in line for the next opening on the regular local-room staff, for which she might have applied in vain as an outsider.

EXERCISES

1. Grade yourself on the qualities of a reporter as listed in the text, on a scale of zero to ten. If possible, have some one else who knows you well (perhaps a member of your family) read the chapter and then grade you. Compare the two records.

2. What weaknesses have you that would militate against your success in newspaper work? How do you think you could go about to overcome them?

3. The teacher and three or four members of the class will "stage" an incident involving rapid action and several different participants. The rest of the class are to take notes as a test in rapidity and accuracy of observation. Compare the resulting reports.

4. A lawyer has written that the testimony of eye witnesses of

any complicated event is the most unreliable form of evidence. What ground has he for this opinion?

5. What "beats" are available as regular sources of news for your student paper?

6. Which is a more important asset to the reporter: a "nose for news" or a gift for writing? Which do you think you have to a higher degree? How can you strengthen the weaker of these two qualities in yourself?

7. A woman reporter is sent on a story to the office of a man who becomes (a) flirtatious; (b) insulting; (c) profane. Should she scream? Threaten him with the police? Lecture him on his bad language and lack of chivalry? Leave the room without getting the story? What is the best way for her to handle the situation? (Both sexes should take part in the discussion.)

8. A reporter is given advance information of the line of defense to be taken at a trial, with the proviso that the story shall be held for the present because it would tip the hand of the defense to the prosecution. The reporter's own sympathies lie with the prosecution. What should he do?

IX

GETTING THE STORY

A famous old recipe for cooking hare begins: "First, catch your hare." The same advice applies to the news story, for the news must be caught before it can be written.

Before going out on any story the reporter should know as much as possible about the story he is to get. Previous news stories in which the same individual has figured should if possible be obtained in the form of clippings from the newspaper library. On any running story it is of course essential for the reporter to know what has already happened and what the other papers as well as his own have printed on the subject. An eminent visitor to be interviewed can at the very least be looked up in *Who's Who* and if time allows the reporter may learn more of his works or achievements by consulting the public library. A background of information, as complete as there is time to make it, will make a story at once easier to get and far better in quality when it is written.

The poorest possible attitude for the reporter to adopt when he is called upon to get a story is that the story is not worth getting. Small stories are as necessary as big ones to the make-up of a daily paper. If he feels that his assignment is too trivial to be worthy of his best efforts, the reporter will not only make a bad impression on others, to whom their own affairs do seem important, but he will invariably turn in a story just as poor as he thought it was going to be.

On the other hand, if he sets his wits to work, he may find in the apparently commonplace story some unexpected feature to give it individuality and added interest. If no such angle presents itself, there is still no reason why he should not do a good, workmanlike job on the material at his disposal. The big, sure-fire "page one" stories are naturally given not to beginners but to reporters who have already proved their ability through experience. The man who muffs the story of a school picnic through carelessness and lack of interest is not likely to be chosen for more momentous assignments. But the thrill of lifting a small story out of its class by more than merely routine treatment is open to the novice as well as the veteran.

Next to contemptuous carelessness, the attitude most unfavorable to success in getting a story is the anticipation of failure. There are times when the city editor's assignments seem unreasonable or even impossible. There are occasions also when the reporter has the liveliest personal sympathy with the motives actuating a refusal to give information or to talk for publication. In such circumstances, a mere bulldog determination to get the story is not enough. No one who wants to keep something from publication is unduly impressed by the mere fact that some one else wants to have it published.

The reporter who starts out with the idea that he will probably be refused or even that he ought to be refused must convince himself before he can hope to convince others. A story for which others have tried and failed is not necessarily for that reason unobtainable. A slight shift in the circumstances, or in the method of approach and argument, may modify the entire situation.

The best possible means of obtaining difficult information is by convincing the person concerned that it is really to his advantage to divulge it. It is not his business to give it to

you; but it is your business to make him want to give it to you. There are many reasons for reluctance, depending on the nature of the story and of the individual. Some persons avoid publicity for no definite reason except a species of stage fright at appearing in the public eye, or the fear that their friends may think they have pushed themselves forward. Sometimes they are innocently involved in tragedies or difficulties for which others are responsible, and naturally dislike to be dragged into the situation. Sometimes they are themselves in embarrassing positions. But if there is a legitimate reason for publishing the story (a point on which the city editor's judgment is the reporter's law), a reason can be found for urging that the required information should be given out.

An example from real life will illustrate the care that is taken in deciding on the approach to a difficult story. A boy twelve years old shot and killed his step-father during a family quarrel. The family was one of some distinction in the community. The boy's mother was prostrated at her home, refusing all interviews and pictures — an attitude with which no reporter could fail to sympathize. The reporter went first to the city jail, where the boy had been questioned, then to the detention home, where he had been sent, and talked with the officers in charge at both places. When she (it happened to be a woman reporter on the case) went to the mother's house, she sent word that she had news of the woman's son and a message to deliver from the boy. When she had thus obtained access to the mother, she found her in a state of collapse with the terror that her son would be hanged. She was ignorant of the law and of police methods, and no one had thought to enlighten her. When the reporter informed her, in accordance with the facts learned from the authorities, that the boy would almost certainly be exonerated by the coroner's jury, the mother's

gratitude was such that she gladly gave both story and pictures to the reporter who had done her the service of bringing her definite information and relieving her harrowing anxiety. In this case the reporter transformed an errand that looked like a brutal invasion of privacy and grief into an errand of mercy, and obtained an exclusive story. The approach was a deliberately chosen device; but it was a device based on a sympathetic understanding of human nature.

Often the desire to avoid publicity calls to mind the mythical habit of the ostrich that hides its head in the sand to keep from being seen. If a story has once "broken," it is sure to be published. It has passed out of the domain of private life and has become public news. The reporter can explain this obvious fact and add that his paper wishes to get an accurate account from authentic sources instead of relying on outside information. It is not in his power to suppress the story; but he may give the assurance that his paper wishes to present it in a dignified manner and that he will treat the facts in a way to cause the least possible embarrassment.

Another method of approach, especially in stories of a controversial nature, is to persuade the news source that the paper is doing him a favor by giving him the opportunity to present his own side as cogently as possible. The paper does not wish to be unfair and use only material from unfriendly sources. Often a man who has vowed to say nothing for publication will undergo a change of heart when persuaded that the other side has already given out a version unfavorable to him.

The reporter should stress the point that his paper desires only to get at the real facts and that he believes the person to whom he is speaking will realize that it is to his interest to give a truthful version. Even though the reporter himself believes that the truth is being tampered with, he often

conceals his skepticism behind a mask of credulity. It is his business to get the story, not to show how clever he is in seeing through his interlocutor. It is often the height of cleverness to put away personal vanity and appear to be ingenuous. Of course the reporter's knowledge of human nature must come into play in determining whether he shall sift the false from the true by direct challenge or by subtler measures. But more often than not he can use a rapier more successfully than a bludgeon.

This advice may sound somewhat Machiavellian; but, after all, it is the reporter's business to get information, not to argue the case. His own opinions for the time being are irrelevant. He is there to listen, not to argue. If there are discrepancies in the account he receives, he need not pounce on them like a cross-examining lawyer. It does just as well to suggest that he has apparently misunderstood and would like to have the situation made perfectly clear. Often the case for the other side is taken up, and the person interviewed is given the opportunity to make any explanations he sees fit or is able to give. The reporter himself is not called upon to make a decision between the two versions while conducting the interview but should be both critical and fair in his attitude toward each side.

The person who is determined not to talk may be thrown off his guard by the asking of a few preliminary questions not directly related to the subject in hand.

"I am not asking you to discuss this topic at all," the reporter may say, "but there are one or two little points not directly connected with it which we should like to clear up. I should like to ask one or two questions. It is entirely up to you to say whether or not you wish to answer them." It is a curious trait of human nature that almost invariably, having been led to break silence on trivial and irrelevant topics, the person concerned will unwittingly open the gates

and will, contrary to his intention, go on to talk of the subject which is naturally filling his mind.

The reporter can often guide the interview in the desired direction without appearing to dictate. Comparatively few untrained persons distinguish between the important and the unimportant, especially where their own affairs are concerned. By the unobtrusive use of suggestion, the reporter keeps the conversation on the track and prevents it from wandering off into endless by-paths.

Threats and intimidation should be used only rarely and with utmost discrimination. They are far more likely to arouse stubborn antagonism than to have the desired effect. There are occasions when the threat of exposure or of an unfavorable presentation to the public is justified, when it is the only language the person concerned is likely to understand; but, in general, it is well to remember that even the criminal has his own point of view and that he will respond to the carrot of fair treatment more readily than to the big stick. The ancient fable of the man who hugged his coat more tightly around him in the north wind, but cast it aside under the warm rays of the sun, contains an excellent moral for the news gatherer.

Another approach to be used only on rare occasions is the appeal to sympathy. The begging attitude is at best an ignominious one. The reporter who pleads for a favor on the ground that he may lose his job if he fails to bring in the story must not be surprised to discover that a stranger does not care a whit whether the reporter keeps his job or loses it. It is far more self-respecting — and incidentally more sincere — to argue that the editor is determined to get the story, sooner or later, and that it will save time, trouble, and annoyance on all sides to give it at once.

Much has already been said about adopting the other person's point of view. In fact, almost every device used

to obtain a story is simply an example of putting oneself in some one else's place and depends on a genuine effort of the understanding. This does not mean that in talking with a criminal one must pretend to be a denizen of the underworld. On the contrary, it is by being most simply a human being that one is most likely to touch the human level shared by both king and crook. But it does mean a real concentration on other personalities and a submergence of one's own. It is a wise rule never to under-estimate the native intelligence and not to over-estimate the formal education of the person with whom one is dealing. In getting news, the object is not to show off the reporter's accomplishments, not to deepen the artificial gulf between one human being and another, but to make any bar to easy and natural intercourse as unobtrusive as possible. With a little imagination and care, it is easy to avoid using words and ideas that are likely to be unfamiliar to the person with whom one is speaking and to meet him, as nearly as possible, on his own educational level.

The use of deliberate deception is not only dishonorable but is in the long run poor policy. Deception, after all, indicates a lack of resourcefulness and ingenuity. A reporter who worms his way into a house by pretending to be a house-to-house canvasser is likely to be ejected with indignation when he finally reveals himself; and that indignation will very likely find further expression by giving the sought-after story to the rival paper. Moreover, the reporter who refuses to resort to falsification knows that he must put his wits to work all the more keenly to obtain his result by legitimate methods. He will therefore exhaust every legitimate device to get his results, while the pretender, once his first deception has failed, has forfeited every advantage by rousing the antagonism and ill will of the person whom he tried to deceive.

There is, however, an occasional exception to this rule against disguise and camouflage. When outsiders endeavor for their own purposes to block the access of the press to the source of news, the reporter considers that no private interests should be allowed to infringe the right of the press to obtain the facts. There are times when he must accept the gauntlet thrown and engage in a battle of wits with the opposing forces.

For example, the owner refused to allow reporters to enter an apartment house where a major crime had been committed. A quick-witted woman reporter crossed the street to a grocery store, bought a dozen eggs, left her hat and coat on the counter, and calmly, with a friendly nod to the apartment house manager, who was engaged in sulphurous argument with press representatives on the door step, tripped her way down the hall in the rôle of a tenant bringing home the materials for supper. Such a ruse is held justifiable, since the right of the public to the news is considered superior to the right of an individual, for his own private advantage (in this case, fear of undesirable publicity for his apartment house), to hinder the efforts of the press to learn and publish the facts.

The reporter ordered to get a story is not expected to take "*No*" for an answer, even when persistence may become uncomfortable and embarrassing. If one method of approach fails, another must be tried. Arguments sink slowly into consciousness and sometimes have a cumulative force. When every resource has seemed to fail, resistance may suddenly crumble. Such perseverance is at times unpleasant to the reporter who in private life is a sensitive person; but most persons have an inner core of reasonableness which tells them that after all it is the reporter's business to exhaust every means of getting what he has been sent to get. This gradual conviction that, whatever his

personal preference, the reporter is obliged to stay until he succeeds often wears down resistance and has its effect at the eleventh hour.

The taking of notes on the spot is a great and obvious advantage to the reporter. But, since the mere sight of pencil and paper sometimes has the effect of immediately blocking the flow of speech, it is essential to cultivate an accurate memory even to the extent of quoting verbatim from mental notes alone. A statement gains in color and vividness by following the speaker's own style of expression. Of course every quoted statement must be unimpeachably accurate in its substance.

On the other hand, many speakers — especially those with some previous experience of talking for publication — gain confidence when they see that notes are being taken. It is wise to quote back to the speaker any controversial matter or any technical statements which must be translated into more popular language for the newspaper reader. Repetition not only impresses the points on the reporter's own mind, but also on the speaker's; he is less likely to believe himself to have been misquoted, when he sees his words in print, if he has not only said them but heard them repeated. Such repetition also gives the opportunity for additions and corrections. If he has found it inadvisable to take notes while getting the story, the reporter should seize the first opportunity to jot down the ideas and phrases which he wishes to use. If he waits until he has returned to the office and is ready to write his story, he will find that much of his material has faded and become vague, general, and commonplace instead of picturesque and vital.

The press is often accused of showing scant respect for personal privacy. In so far as this is true — and there is no denying that it sometimes is — the individual is made the victim of public interest. So long as readers are in-

terested in the affairs of others — and there is not a shadow of doubt that they *are* thus interested — the newspaper fulfills the demands of the many at the expense of the few. The newspaper must accept the famous aphorism of President Cleveland: "A condition, not a theory, confronts us." Humanity in this respect must reform itself if it is to be reformed. The newspaper editor is not in a position to take over the job and certainly the reporter cannot. The utmost he can do is to make his invasion as little obnoxious as possible.

Personal privacy is not invaded for the mere fun of the thing. The individuals concerned must first have done something to put themselves in the public eye. If they go their way without attracting public interest and attention, they are not besieged by the press. The best thing the reporter can do is to meet their resentment by leading them to face the fact that what they have done is already news, outside personal control, and that neither he nor they can change that fact.

Those who are most resentful of an invasion of their privacy seldom stop to think that their antagonism is awakened only when they themselves are the victims. They do not themselves wish to appear as news material; but as readers they are willing and eager to be informed of the affairs of others. It is only when their turn comes to be performers instead of spectators that the moral issue of privacy assumes a sudden importance in their eyes.

Newspapers, nevertheless, are not so cruel and heartless in satisfying the curiosity of the public as they are sometimes accused of being. It is a very common practice to suppress the names of juvenile delinquents unless the delinquency takes the form of a major crime. Children who are innocently involved in news stories of an unpleasant nature and who are old enough to be pained by the publicity are

usually spared embarrassment and distress in so far as this is possible. The adult population is assumed to be old enough to take care of itself and to be prepared to pay the penalty of either the fame or the notoriety resulting from its own actions.

News stories are of two sorts, the "open" and the "exclusive." The days of acute personal rivalry, when the reporter of each paper viewed the reporters of rival sheets as his deadly enemies, are largely past. There is a growing tendency for reporters to pool their resources and exchange information. This tendency is the outgrowth of a realization that reporters as employees have certain interests in common which bind them together in a class loyalty. Why, they ask, should one of them subject another to a reprimand or possible loss of his job through failure to obtain information — especially when next week the tables may be turned? Naturally, owners and editors, from the point of view of their own interests, prefer to stress the loyalty of employee to employer rather than the loyalty of employees to each other as a class. But, despite editorial opposition, co-operation has become the rule rather than the exception so far as more or less routine and open information is concerned. Competition in news gathering, as in other lines of business, has lost much of its old cut-throat, excessively individualistic character.

The usual attitude of reporters from competing newspapers working on the same story is now a courteous, friendly, and mutually helpful one. On an open story, such as an official hearing, a great public disaster, or a trial in court, nothing is gained by refusal to exchange favors in a spirit of co-operation and good will. But, though the reporter does not hold back his help in sharing information which he knows his rival by taking a little trouble could obtain independently, he still keeps a watchful eye open

for private tips and possible exclusive angles which are in the nature of personal discoveries and on which he remains discreetly silent. Moreover, the news significance even of information open to all may be discerned by one reporter and missed by others. There is thus still a definite place in the newspaper world for the "scoop," and the thrill of playing the game more skilfully than his rivals is one of the dearest rewards of the reporter's working life.

Unearthing a scoop, or an exclusive story, is the reporter's chief opportunity for personal achievement as a news gatherer. Sometimes a paper is able to "break" an entire new story in advance of its competitors. More often the opportunity lies in uncovering new angles to a story or getting information or interviews of which reporters on rival papers are ignorant or which they have tried in vain to obtain. Sometimes the initiative of the reporter in search of a scoop has results of real public importance. For example, it was a Chicago reporter who picked up the decisive clue in the Leopold-Loeb murder case of 1924 and was awarded the Pulitzer prize for his achievement. But, in general, the scoop is the one phase of newspaper work which is of greater interest to the craft than to the public at large. It is extremely doubtful whether a noticeable number of readers knows or cares that a certain piece of news appeared an edition earlier in one paper than in another; yet city editors are radiant, and reporters tell years later how they beat the opposition on the streets by fifteen minutes with a big story. However, although the average reader may be indifferent to a single scoop, the paper which consistently beats the opposition papers with the news will win recognition for its success. Subconsciously, the public looks upon this paper as a live and enterprising one and turns to it with assurance that the latest and most complete information will be found in its pages.

The reporter on the trail of what he believes to be exclusive information takes care not to show his accelerated interest by his manner and thus tip his rivals to the fact that something special is in the wind. A hint of anticipatory triumph will set his rivals on his trail, declining to be shaken off. The advertising slogan "Be nonchalant" applies admirably to the situation. If vanity tempts the reporter to impress others with his enterprise and cleverness, he is more than likely to miss the opportunity to demonstrate those qualities.

It is, of course, the worst of bad manners, and inexpedient as well, to gloat over the personal triumph of a scoop. As a matter of obvious tactics, each reporter on a big story will be closely watched by his competitors to prevent him from securing something which they have not found. If he succeeds, he can afford to let others do the admiring, knowing that luck as well as ability plays a part in success and that his turn to fail where others succeed may come. The quest of a scoop is the one element of news gathering which has the sporting aspect, the game spirit. To it the rules of the game apply: to be a modest winner, a generous loser, and a good sport at all times.

News stories do not follow any prearranged pattern. They have a way of diverging along unpredictable paths. The reporter must therefore always be on the alert to "expect the unexpected." When out on a story that takes some time he should telephone his office at frequent intervals. Information received during his absence may have changed the entire tenor of the story, or his own latest information may be needed by other members of the staff for investigating and developing new angles. If matters do not develop in accordance with his prearranged plan, he does not therefore give up the job. To take a small example, and one of frequent occurrence, the reporter may be sent to a house

where he finds no one at home. It is then a routine procedure to call upon the neighbors; from them he may not only discover the whereabouts of the person he is seeking but may find out important information from unplanned sources.

Even though a reporter's main task is to get the story he goes after, he keeps his eye open for other stories which may cross his path unexpectedly and communicates them to his office at once. The story is told of a "cub" sent out to cover a meeting. On his way he was eye-witness of a train collision in which many lives were lost. An hour or so later he telephoned his office that he had arrived too late for the meeting because of the blocking of traffic, and that he therefore had nothing to report. The big story which broke directly under his nose registered with him only as the cause of an unavoidable delay. Although the reporter's first responsibility is to follow orders, he can nevertheless be on the look-out for news outside his regular assignment; and his motto in such cases should be: "When in doubt, flash the office."

In these days when even the conservative newspapers carry many illustrations, getting the picture is as important as getting the story. The usefulness of many of the beat men who do little writing lies in their ability to prepare for pictures in advance and to persuade reluctant subjects to pose.

The camera man and the reporter work as a team. The reporter is in command so far as subject matter is concerned; but the camera man is an expert in his field, and his decision must be accepted on technical questions of photography. The reporter is responsible for the proper identification of pictures unless the work is divided by arrangement. In that case, the camera man, while the reporter is otherwise engaged, will caption his own pictures.

For some inexplicable reason, many persons will give out

a story willingly but will refuse to consent to an accompanying illustration. Far more rarely the reverse attitude is encountered. The methods used to obtain photographs are the same as those for obtaining news; that is, they include every legitimate means of persuasion. Unless consent to the picture has been given in advance, it is often advisable for the camera man to wait out of sight, leaving the persuasion to the reporter. Sometimes the camera man may be of aid in making suggestions or advancing new arguments, but he should not interrupt nor interfere. To do so may ruin a carefully thought-out plan of campaign.

The appeal to vanity is often successful in gaining consent for publication of a picture, especially when the subject is a woman. If she is told that an old-fashioned or unattractive picture from the files must be used unless she allows a new one to be taken, she will usually choose the lesser evil. Even the woman under arrest for a crime is not immune to vanity. Police pictures, which are seldom flattering, are often given out simultaneously to all papers interested; and arrested persons can frequently be induced to pose for the camera man rather than face the publication of these police prints. Stealing a picture in the literal sense of taking it without the owner's consent is ostensibly frowned upon by many newspapers as a dangerous proceeding. The same ethical objection can be brought against stealing a picture in the sense of photographing the subject without his knowledge or consent. Nevertheless, both practices are sometimes used as a last resort.

Newspaper photographs should be action pictures whenever possible; that is, they should help to tell the story as well as illustrate it. Press photographs of champion golfers show them, not in evening dress, but swinging a club; if an actress announces that she is leaving the stage for a life of domesticity, the picture will probably show her

wielding a broom or holding a frying pan. Pictures of animals and inanimate objects usually include a human figure to give them human interest. The largest pumpkin in the county is shown in the arms of a pretty girl; a new type of airplane displays the aviator along with the machine. Occasionally, however, an inanimate object is of such importance in itself that it takes on the quality of personal interest and requires no human figure to add to its appeal.

Although it is more important that pictures should be dramatic and have news value than that they should be attractive to the eye, attractiveness is sought as a close secondary consideration. If the pictures of an exceptionally pretty girl and of a middle-aged man have precisely equivalent news value, the picture of the girl will be given the larger space and the more prominent position. Because of their appeal, pictures of children (unless the accompanying story would cause them undeserved pain and embarrassment) rank high in human interest value.

Photographs taken by staff camera men are preferred to formal studio photographs because they can be more closely connected with the story, offer opportunity for "action shots," and often reproduce more clearly on newsprint paper. Not all the pictures in your daily paper, however, were taken on the spot. The library, in addition to clippings, keeps on file the photographs of prominent persons and events. Photographs of distant persons and events are obtained in the same way as distant news — by photographic press service corresponding to the news agencies. Underwood and Underwood, Wide World, P and A, and the Associated Press are among the largest of these services. Photographs from the press services have captions attached to them, identifying the subject and briefly outlining the news story to which they apply. With the development of the telephoto — a device by which light is transformed into

electrical impulse, this impulse transmitted over a telephone wire, and then re-transformed into light on a photographic plate — pictures can be sent from New York to San Francisco or between other distant points at almost the same speed as the telegraphic dispatch.

EXERCISES

1. An important witness in a trial refused to talk to the press. One reporter flashed his press badge as a police badge, introduced himself as a man sent by the police, and commanded the witness to answer his questions. However, he failed to get her story. Another reporter, coming later, informed the witness that the man she had taken for a policeman was in reality a reporter. Was it ethical for him to unmask the deception practiced by his predecessor? The second reporter persuaded the witness (who was a sister of the defendant in a murder case) to grant an exclusive interview, without the use of deception. Can you suggest what methods the second reporter may have used?

2. A supposedly wealthy man is discovered to have embezzled a large sum of money and fled. You are sent to interview his wife. What will you say? How will you try to persuade her to consent to a picture?

3. A source of information agrees to give out a story provided his name is not used. How will you persuade him to stand sponsor for his statement?

4. One of the principals in a romantic but not disgraceful elopement says that she does not want any publicity and refuses to pose for a picture. Your paper has already obtained the facts of the story from outside sources. How will you overcome her reluctance?

5. A city council meeting broke up in a fight, in which a political opponent threatened the mayor with physical violence. The mayor's wife seized the assailant and held him until the arrival of the police. How will you persuade her to give an interview on the affair, with picture?

6. A 15-year-old girl runs away from home, cashes a worthless check, steals an automobile, is arrested and taken to the detention home. A woman of thirty follows the same course and is taken to jail. How will the two stories differ in newspaper treatment both as to text and pictures?

7. Using various sources of information, get a story on the opening of your school or college: number of students, number of new students, comparison with former years, changes in the faculty, etc.

8. You have been sent out on the Macbeth murder story, which has just broken. What will you do before leaving the office? The arrest of the two servants is expected shortly. You are to interview them, interview the police as to their plans, interview Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and get their pictures. Outline your methods of approach and procedure with each of these different characters. Your newspaper files contain a photograph of Lady Macbeth taken at the time of her marriage; how will you make use of this fact in trying for a new picture? What other pictures will you tell the camera man to take? You arrive first on the scene and find the bloody dagger. It is your duty as a citizen to turn it over to the police — but how can you do this in such a way that your paper will have a scoop on this important clue?

9. Appoint a member of the class (if necessary, consulting the physics department) to report in detail on the telephoto.

X

THE NEWS STORY: THE LEAD

The newspaper is the intermediary between events as they occur and the public which wishes to know about them. Like the central nervous system in the human body, the newspaper is the recipient of impulses from the outside world, which it transforms into outgoing impulses in the form of the printed story. The discovery of facts is its first function, and the presentation of those facts to the public is its second. The facts as they occur or as they are discovered are disjointed and unorganized. The news story, like the work of fiction or the expository article, must present its material in a coherent whole. One of two things may safely be assumed of the reporter who rushes in and immediately sits down to click out his story on the typewriter: he is either sufficiently experienced to have organized his material mentally on the way in, or he will write a garbled and unintelligible account.

The material of a story, more often than not, is obtained piece-meal. In conversation, persons habitually flit from one topic to another and back again; or the reporter himself may have done the flitting, discovering an angle of a story and then supporting it with information received later from additional sources. His first task, therefore, in writing the news account is to sort his material so that relevant items will be closely joined.

Unlike the work of fiction or the essay, however, the news story is subject to limitations both as to time and space.

The reporter must not only be able to construct the main outline of his story quickly, with a clear view of the relation of its parts to one another and to the whole, but he must also be able to decide between the essential and the less important elements. Only the novice, when told to keep his story within a given length, will include all details until he has reached the end of his allotted space and then stop. By so doing he may have included minor points and "buried" factors of real significance. The experienced writer learns to adjust his story to the Procrustean bed of the news columns without sacrificing either its feet or its head. He can write a story in a half-column or a column and a half in such a way that the reader in either case will feel that he is in possession of a complete account.

Nevertheless the news writer cannot sit staring at his typewriter for half an hour before he begins, while the deadline creeps nearer. Frequently enough, that half-hour represents the entire time at his disposal. If he is wise, he uses the time spent in returning to the office to concentrate on the planning of his story. Even if he has to telephone his findings, this preliminary work of organization will greatly facilitate the labor of the rewrite man, who will receive a report in definite sequence instead of a series of uncoordinated statements.

Before he begins to write, the first and most important question for the reporter to ask and answer is: "What is this story about?" Just as the photographer must focus his camera on one selected object to serve as a central figure in the foreground, so the reporter must decide what is the focal point of his story and adopt a point of view which will determine the relative positions of every other factor. The more complex and involved the story, the more necessary it is to point its diverse elements toward a common center. Sometimes this focal point is distinct and obvious. Some-

times the writer has to choose from among several possible points of view. But he must make the choice. Often the city editor's first words to a returning reporter are: "Well, what is the story?" The reader, although it may be subconsciously, asks the same question. He wants to know first of all that there is a wood instead of being left to find his way among the individual trees.

The primary purpose of the news story is to convey immediate information. This immediacy is the principle behind the technique which most strikingly differentiates the news story from other forms of writing. In the news story, the essential information is presented at once. When the focal point of the story has been decided, that point in itself will suggest and furnish the lead. The importance of the lead or opening of a news story is thus inherent in the purpose and structure of news writing. The news story is narrative in its content, telling what happens rather than what merely exists; but, instead of relating events in the order of their occurrence, it presents the main point first, subordinating both logical and chronological sequence to the demand that the most important information should be conveyed to the reader as quickly as possible.

For this reason the admonition given to Alice in Wonderland, "Begin at the beginning and go on until you come to the end," does not apply to the news story. It works back from effects to causes, rather than proceeding from causes to effect in direct chronological order. If an airplane crashes, the crash is the focal point of the story, not the circumstances leading up to it. If a presidential candidate were assassinated while making an important speech, the assassination, not the speech, would be the lead of the story. The news story, in short, works back from its climax, not toward it, since the purpose of the lead is to put the reader in immediate possession of the essential facts.

The reader will naturally wish to know first of all *what* happened, to *whom* it happened, *where* and *when* it happened, *how* and sometimes *why* it happened. Not all of these things can be told in one breath. That is why the lead is the most difficult as well as the most important part of a news story. It must be brief, it must be comprehensive, and it must arouse interest which will carry the reader on to the conclusion of the story even though he has been put in possession of its most important fact at the start. It must at the same time satisfy curiosity and incite it.

In most cases, what happened and to whom it happened are the elements of greatest immediate importance. If Lindbergh's plane were lost during a flight, the fact that something had happened to Lindbergh would excite more readers than the fact that an airplane was lost. The *who* in this instance would be more important than the *what*. On the other hand, the crash of a passenger plane would be of more immediate news interest than the names of the passengers, unless they were important news personalities.

The place and time of any occurrence are necessary to orient the reader. He wants to know at once whether something happened an hour ago or last week, and whether it occurred on the next street or in China. Other things being equal, the reader is most interested in what is nearest to him both in space and in time and is therefore most likely to affect him personally. An event must be of greater intrinsic importance, the greater its distance from the reader's own life and surroundings, if it is to attract and hold his attention. In order to bring the story close to the reader, the lead fixes the time in terms of the immediate present if possible. If events that happened in the past have just been brought to light, the lead will contain some such phrase as " it was revealed today " instead of merely announcing that such and such an event occurred last week. For the same

reason, if there is a local angle to a story of national scope, the aspect which brings it close to the reader's own surroundings is presented in the lead. There is a reason why each particular story should be published in this particular locality and at this time, and that reason is given at once to the reader.

For example, let us suppose that Jane Addams is interviewed while passing through your community. The work of Jane Addams is of national importance, therefore what she says will interest many readers. She is a famous person, therefore what she says gains added interest from the fact she is the person who says it. The questions *who* and *what* will therefore be answered in the lead of the story. But the reader will also wonder just why he is presented with the opinions of Jane Addams in today's paper. Therefore the lead will include the information that Jane Addams passed through your city yesterday and thereby came close in both space and time to the lives of the local residents.

The time and place of an occurrence are usually a degree less important in the reader's mind than the occurrence itself. For this reason, while included in the lead, they are seldom given first place. Occasionally the *how* and the *why* are so unusual or spectacular that they form the focal point of a story. An ordinary thing can be done for an extraordinary reason or in an extraordinary manner. In that case, the motive or the means may take precedence over the occurrence itself and the person or persons concerned in it.

The same story, of course, is often susceptible to various lead treatments. On September 8, 1929, the wrecked airplane *City of San Francisco* was found after nearly a week of search. To the morning papers of September 9, the Universal Service issued a story with the following lead:

"GRANTS, N. M., Sept. 8.—In the dim flickering light of lanterns, men were slowly and carefully feeling their way down over the ragged slope of Mount Taylor late tonight, carrying burdens.

"They carried eight litters, each bearing a silent, shrouded form.

"The victims of the Transcontinental Air Transport plane disaster were coming home."

The Associated Press dispatch, with the same dateline, began as follows:

"The last search for the Transcontinental Air Transport plane *City of San Francisco* ended today as a party of forest rangers, an ambulance crew, and newspaper men lifted a burned and crumpled fusilage from the charred bodies of the five passengers and a crew of three on the side of Mount Taylor, seven miles from its summit, and twenty-seven miles northeast of here."

The Universal Service correspondent framed his lead to establish an emotional tone. His sentences have the rhythm of a funeral march, and first of all he paints the picture of men picking their way down the mountain side by the light of flickering lanterns. The lanterns were not important as facts, yet they led the story on account of their emotional effect. Because of the nation-wide interest in the disaster and the search, this writer assumed that the reader already knew the preceding events leading up to the discovery of the lost plane. It would be impossible to base a lead in this fashion on emotional effect unless long-continued interest in the story made it safe to assume that all readers were familiar with the circumstances. Even so, this lead may be criticized for making so large an assumption, particularly when it is carried to the extent of omitting the name of the plane.

The Associated Press lead, on the other hand, is a direct and conventional statement of fact, but it could be greatly improved by cutting. The opening sentence is too long and is clogged with unessential detail. For example, "eight vic-

tims " would have been better than " five passengers and a crew of three," and " the side of Mount Taylor " is sufficient identification of place without including " seven miles from its summit and twenty-seven miles northeast of here." These are details for which the reader is willing to wait until he reaches the body of the story.

The first lead contains three short sentences, forty-nine words in all. The second is a single sentence, but that sentence of sixty-four words is longer than the entire three paragraphs of the first example. The Associated Press reporter began with a straightforward *what* and included *where, when,* and *who.* The Universal Service correspondent began with *how,* included *where,* and *when,* and left what has happened and to whom somewhat vague to the visitor from Mars — an inadvisable procedure, redeemed in this instance by the established magnitude of the story and the success in achieving a fine emotional and pictorial effect. In this story, the *who* — that is, the names of the victims and of those who found them — was of subsidiary interest to the fact that the plane was found, and therefore should be left for the body of the story.

The afternoon papers of the same date, September 9, must of course, also carry the story. But the afternoon papers furnish the news of the current day; therefore an event of the preceding night must be placed before the reader from a later time-angle. The plane can no longer be said to have been found " today," but the reader wants to feel that something new has happened since he bought his morning paper. The writer may now assume that the reader is aware of the finding of the plane. He therefore writes a new lead, which, in the Associated Press dispatch to afternoon papers, took the following form, under the dateline of September 9:

" Funeral preparations today were marking the final chapters in a story of eight lives snuffed out in the crash of a giant air liner

against a mountain side as a pilot battled blindly for a haven of safety against a storm then raging.

" With five passengers, one a woman, and a crew of three dead, their lips forever sealed, the cause of the crash of the *City of San Francisco,* Transcontinental Air Transport plane, on Mt. Taylor, twenty miles from here, may never be known. A searching party of fifty men, including an Associated Press correspondent, was led by Sheriff Bob Roberts up precipitous sides of Mt. Taylor, which thrusts its jagged peak nearly 12,000 feet into the sky that was once the lane of the ' mistress of the air.' "

This lead adds to the main story the " follow angle " of the funeral arrangements. The main story having already been published, the writer here takes up the question *why* (the cause of the wreck). The word *today* gives the essential *when,* and the *what* and *where* are also included, with some additional matter on the *who.*

The lead must waste no space in generalities, but must convey clear and definite information. A dispatch from Washington on September 10, 1929, began thus:

" A story which is proof that truth is stranger than fiction was unfolded here today.

" Word was received from New York that habeas corpus proceedings were instituted there today. . . ."

The first paragraph of this lead, and therefore the most important paragraph of the entire story, says nothing whatever. The reader does not want to hear again the platitude that truth is stranger than fiction. He wants the news, not a general remark on the relation of reality to imagination. The paper receiving the dispatch at once changed the lead to read:

" Stranger than fiction is the story unfolded here today with receipt of word from New York that habeas corpus proceedings were instituted there today against the department of labor to force bail of Albert Sichofsky, former inmate of Folsom and San

Quentin penitentiaries and the Los Angeles county jail, who is being held at Ellis Island in New York for deportation. Argument on the writ was set for September 17."

The opening sentence of this revised lead is long and involved, and not particularly good English style. The phrase " here today " is repeated in " there today " and the locality jumps from Washington to New York and thence to California. Nevertheless, it does tell the reader at once, not that truth is stranger than fiction, but that this particular occurrence is stranger than fiction. It should also be noted that the local angle is here placed in the lead. The paper which made the revision is published in California. Therefore the information is given without delay that Sichofsky has served in California penal institutions. This gives definite point to relating the difficulties in which Sichofsky was involved in the East.

News stories may be pure narrative, or they may be primarily an exposition of ideas cast in a narrative form. In a news story an idea cannot be statically presented. It must in some sense " happen." The lead of the straight narrative story consists either of a summary, of which particulars follow later, or it selects one of the series of events for leading place because of its outstanding interest.

An Associated Press dispatch from London, September 10, 1929, begins:

" Although there have been no formal declarations of war, Russian and Chinese dispatches today both indicated an apparent state of open hostility at points on the Manchurian border."

This is a general-summary lead which, by the use of the *although* clause, indicates in the opening sentence that two sides of the situation will be presented, together with the conclusion reached from both Chinese and Russian sources.

This use of contrast and comparison in an opening statement gives the reader a complete view of a situation in the

briefest possible space, and the same device can be effectively employed in personal stories as well as in those treating of national or group affairs. For example, the Associated Press carried the following lead on a story from Knoxville, Tenn.:

"Miss Mildred Doyle, twenty-three, who is accused by parents of her pupils of being the product of 'a young, reckless, thoughtless, don't care flapper age, thinking of everything but the serious side of life,' performed her duties as principal of a county high school near here without show of concern today while awaiting a hearing of the charge before the Knox county board of education."

In a single sentence, without confusion, this lead includes the *who, what, when, where, how,* and *why* of the story. In addition, by the use of quotation, it conveys the contrasting attitudes of the teacher and her accusers, giving the reader a sense of struggle in which he may take sides, and at the end of the sentence points forward to what is expected to happen next.

The very short news story most frequently begins with a bare statement of the persons concerned and what happened to them. This is particularly true of stories, not important in themselves, but catering to the reader's interest in the affairs of people familiar to him — familiar either because they are his neighbors or because they are well-known characters.

"Tom Mix," says an Associated Press dispatch from Dallas, Texas, "motion picture actor and circus performer, was injured slightly here yesterday when his horse fell during a circus performance." It is not the fact of some one being slightly injured which attracts the reader's attention, but the fact that something had happened to Tom Mix.

In Walesburg, Colorado, on the same day, the Associated Press reported: "Seven persons were injured when John Philip Sousa's special train was derailed thirteen miles south-

west of here this afternoon." If the only person injured had been Sousa, his name would have headed the story. As it is, his is the only name mentioned in the lead; but the derailing of a train, injuring seven persons, is an event of sufficient magnitude to give the *what* equal claim with the *who* on the reader's attention.

The *what* and the *who* are very closely conjoined and furnish the most common of all news leads. In choosing between them for an opening, the writer can ask himself: "Which is more interesting — that Jones did something, or that this thing happened, and incidentally happened to Jones?"

It is a general rule of news writing not to begin a story with the words *today, tomorrow, at three o'clock,* or the like, although a word or words conveying the time must be included in the lead. The time element, however, is seldom the most striking feature of a story. The reader is aware already that he is reading about something that happened close to the present time, otherwise it would not be in that day's paper. There are, naturally, exceptions which make the *when* lead appropriate. The Sacramento Bureau of the San Francisco *Examiner,* for example, issued a story (September 9, 1929) beginning: "After ten days of record-smashing attendance, California's seventy-fifth annual state fair concluded today with a colorful celebration of the seventy-ninth anniversary of the state's admission to the Union." Although this lead includes what happened, the real point to be made is the closing of the fair, and the time-element in the story is consequently given first.

The first story of a murder would naturally give immediately the fact that some one had been killed, who it was, and how and where it happened. However, if later a person was tried for the crime and at the close of the trial the jury remained deadlocked for three or four days, the story an-

nouncing the verdict might begin with the length of time taken to reach it. The public already knows who is being tried and for what; the long-drawn suspense of the jury's deliberations may then become of more striking news value even than the verdict itself, although that, of course, would follow so closely that the reader might not even be aware of the change of emphasis. However, his subconscious reaction to this form of lead would be: "*At last* they've decided!" rather than a calm or even weary, "Well, I see they found him guilty at last."

The story which is a statement of ideas, opinions, prophecies, or conclusions rather than a narrative of events will naturally open with one of the ideas expounded, followed almost immediately by the authority who is being quoted. The *what* in this instance precedes the *who* by a few steps, though not by many. The opening sentence in such a story should be brief and as spectacular as possible in order to seize the reader's attention. Qualifications, explanations, and further developments of the theme, which may be in themselves more important but less immediately striking, are reserved for the body of the story.

An Associated Press dispatch from New York begins thus:

"The American flapper is going to wield a whip hand in her country's drive for prevention of crime, in the opinion of Lady Armstrong, wife of the British consul-general here and member of New York's commission to study crime prevention."

The average reader will not be excited because his eye falls on the name of Lady Armstrong, or of the crime commission; but flappers furnish one of the popular news interests of the general public at the moment.

With a similar knowledge of reader-psychology, Leo A. McClatchy, Washington correspondent, opened a story with the lead:

"Social snobbery towards police and their wives is one of the big contributing factors that prevents attainment of a greater degree of efficiency in suppression of crime in this country. But that will not always be. The time is coming when police work will be classed among the professions; when it will be elevated to the standing of law and medicine.

"This was the opinion voiced by August Vollmer, chief of police of Berkeley, California, and one of the most noted of 'crime doctors,' after his arrival in Washington to take over a temporary assignment with President Hoover's law enforcement commission."

This is an excellent example of dressing up an idea in an attention-arresting form. The bare statement that Vollmer believed police work would eventually attain professional standing would have been equally accurate (probably more so, as there is room for skepticism regarding any mention made by Vollmer of social snobbery and wives); but such a lead would have been tame and unprovocative, though the idea would have been exactly the same.

It will be noticed that both these examples include a sufficient identification of the *who* of the story. In ordinary news stories this identification is given by the address, and frequently by the age and occupation of the person concerned. With the exception of persons whose title is sufficient identification, such as President Hoover or the Prince of Wales, a descriptive phrase is added after the name of even a famous individual. For the domain of fame is bounded by popular interest, and it cannot be assumed that a name noted in one field of interest will be equally familiar without explanation to all sections of the public.

Abstruse or technical ideas must be re-phrased in the lead and given a concrete form or application which will connect them with the interest of the laymen. The reporter who covered a meeting of the American Chemical Society would have had an easier time of it if his readers, like the chemists at the meeting, had been already interested in the

subject and familiar with its technical terms. But if he had quoted the speaker verbatim the average reader would neither have known nor cared what it was all about. The following brief story represents much harder and more thoughtful work than a column-long quotation in the speaker's own words.

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept. 11 (AP).—American automobiles were held responsible for a host of new products, from lipsticks to grain alcohol, in a report to the American Chemical Society today.

The motor car's rôle is not listed as a creator of demand but as mother to a vast quantity of useful chemicals that have come into existence recently from new processes of making gasoline.

In the formerly waste gases from gasoline cracking, said Gustav Egloff of the Universal Oil Products Company of Chicago, chemists have found a potential gold mine of articles that bear little resemblance to gas or gasoline.

There are cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, lamp black and hydrogen, some of them already on the market. There is enough leftover material to make, he said, three hundred million gallons yearly of grain alcohol, three times the amount now consumed commercially in the United States.

Ethylene, just one of the leftover gasoline products, already is made into anesthetics, used to ripen fruit and vegetables and to prepare war gases. Chemists are beginning to get a little "butadiene," which resembles rubber, and can be manufactured into rubber-like substances.

Many fuel gas users are getting a better grade, made so by mixing with some of the former waste from cracked gasoline.

The value of concrete terms is shown in the lead of the foregoing story. It would have been equally accurate and non-technical to write the lead: "Chemists have found many uses for formerly wasted gases from gasoline cracking." But in that case the ordinary reader would not have had the slightest curiosity to go further. His mind is brought to attention by the contrast which makes him ask: "What on earth have lipsticks to do with automobiles?"

The opening statement of a newspaper story should be couched in the most direct and forceful terms possible. If an interesting or important or startling statement is made, the statement itself is the focal point, not the fact that something was stated or that some one said something or other. An opening *that* clause is likely to be clumsy as well as to weaken the force of the impression.

Compare the force of the three following leads:

"That the murderer of John Jones will be arrested within twenty-four hours was announced today by Chief of Police Thomas Smith."

"Chief of Police Thomas Smith today announced that the murderer of John Jones will be arrested within twenty-four hours."

"The murderer of John Jones will be lodged in the city jail before another sun has set. This was the announcement made by Chief of Police Thomas Smith this morning."

In the following three versions the words used are almost identical — only the order of ideas is changed. But the third lead is far more effective than either of the others.

(1) "The French scientist, Georges Delport, who has just published a scholarly exposition entitled 'Insects as Future Masters of the World,' predicts that the civilization of mankind may be overthrown sometime in the future by super-intelligent insects evolved from lowly cockroaches, thousand-leggers, bed bugs, spiders, or ants."

(2) "That the civilization of mankind may be overthrown in

the future by super-intelligent insects is the prediction made by the French scientist, Georges Delport."

(3) "The civilization of mankind may be overthrown sometime in the future by super-intelligent insects evolved from lowly cockroaches, thousand-leggers, spiders, or ants. Such is the prediction made by the French scientist, Georges Delport, who has just published a scholarly exposition on this theory, entitled, 'Insects as Future Masters of the World.'"

Exactly the same principle applies to news in the student paper, with perhaps even added force. Much of the student news will naturally be in the form of announcements made, meetings held, and projects formulated. In these, as in other news, the central point should first be picked out and then presented in arresting form in the lead.

The informal or freak lead, because of its originality, is effective when well done; but, since it does not release the writer from the obligation to convey a maximum of information in a minimum number of words, it increases the problem of an already difficult task. It is most often used on freak stories, stories of a decided emotional tone, stories of the feature type, or as a means of enlivening a routine story.

There is grim humor in the following lead:

"San Quentin Penitentiary, September 9: Admission Day was celebrated today at San Quentin, and while a good many of the boys may have wished it was Exit Day rather than Admission Day they appeared to enjoy themselves just the same."

As Admission Day in California is an annually recurring state holiday, the point made in the ironical play on the word *admission* gave a tang of freshness to a routine story, while giving the same information which a colorless straight lead would have conveyed.

The following freak lead, while sufficiently appropriate to the subject matter, delays just a little too long before ar-

riving at the point and demonstrates the danger of "playing with an idea":

"Berkeley, Sept. 16.—Boy, page Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Two University of California scientists have a lot to tell him about the finer points of criminal investigation. Dr. T. L. Altausen and Dr. Lewis Guther, both of the university's medical school staff, are prepared to put the famous investigator of fiction to shame with their scientific detective work.

"Simple analysis of a single strand of human hair offers one of the most dependable and convenient methods of detecting arsenic poisoning, the men reported today at the conclusion of months of study on the subject."

The danger of the freak lead, as the foregoing example illustrates, is the temptation to delay the essential information of the story. The effectiveness of the lead quoted would be greatly increased by cutting out the second sentence altogether, since it adds nothing to the information except the words "University of California," which could easily be inserted before "medical school" in the third sentence.

The greatest value of the informal lead in straight news stories lies in furnishing a fresh angle from which to start a story whose chief elements have already become familiar. After the *City of San Francisco* disaster, it was to be expected that an inquiry would be made into precise weather conditions at the time of the crash. This expected item of news was given an original turn in the lead written by Marjorie Driscoll for the Los Angeles *Examiner*. The story began:

"Weather reports—who made them, what they said, how good they were.

"This, it became evident today, will be the focal point of the sweeping investigation to be made into the wreck of the T. A. T. air liner *City of San Francisco* and the death of eight persons in the crash on Mount Taylor, N. M., last Tuesday.

"T. A. T. officials yesterday made public the weather report said to have been given the pilot of the plane before it left Albuquerque. This report showed no indication of a storm area over the route."

This lead was calculated to arouse curiosity. If the third paragraph had been put in the place of the first, the story would have had a straight lead instead of an informal one. The lead would have been greatly weakened if the second paragraph had been placed first, in some such form as: "The focal point of the investigation . . . will be an examination of weather reports."

The rarest of all leads is the one which deliberately conceals instead of telling the point of the story. In a story of intrinsic factual importance, the reader must never be left waiting until the end to find out what it is all about. But occasionally a story, usually one based upon an emotional appeal and containing a striking contrast between the apparent circumstances and their outcome, lends itself to an O. Henry type of short-story treatment with the climax at the end. Such a story, indeed, has the natural elements of fiction so strongly present that it is treated as an anecdotal bit of fiction which happens also to be fact. In the following story, published in the Oakland (California) *Tribune*, the reader is led to follow the emotions of bewilderment, horror, surprise, and relief as they were felt by the participants. Sympathy for children being one of the widest human interest appeals, the reader's curiosity to know what is troubling the sobbing child leads him to wish to finish the story. But this treatment could not be successful unless, as in this case, what happened was really so surprising as to justify the suspense opening. If, however, the story had opened with Tony's announcement that he had killed a baby, the mood of horror would have been so strongly established that the explanation would have come as an anticlimax.

"At 4 o'clock this morning Policeman Dan Huge found 13-year-old Tony Souza crying against a pole. Huge heard the sobs when he paused at Fourteenth street and Broadway to see if a bank door was locked. He walked over and laid a hand on the head of the crumpled figure. The boy looked up at the uniform.

"You better arrest me," he sobbed. "I killed a baby."

Huge questioned him and then took him to police headquarters. After the police heard his story, they went to 2531 East Eleventh street, where the boy said he lived. There they found an excited family and there they straightened out the whole affair. Tony wasn't a murderer at all.

Just before dinner last night Tony amused himself by jumping on and off a bed. That was pretty good and Tony thought he would try another bed. He went into the next bedroom, the guest room, and jumped on a bed there.

"A baby opened and shut its eyes on the bed and then lay still and I thought I had killed it, so I ran away," he explained.

Terrified at what he thought he had done, Tony said he "ran and ran" all night. He panted up and down endless streets, and ended at the pole where Dan Huge found him.

The family welcomed Tony with open arms. They had been hunting for him all night, not knowing what had happened. They even wakened the baby, who was a visitor with its mother and owned to the name of Beverly Gonzales, 4, and proved to Tony that everything was all right. Tony collapsed.

"I guess I'll go to bed," he said. "I'm tired."

Some papers have hard and fast rules as to leads to be avoided. None of these rules, however, is universally binding. Most of the blacklisted leads are condemned, not because they are always undesirable in themselves, but because they are likely to be overworked and to lead to a stereotyped manner of expression. A few of the most common are:

Do not begin a story with figures; if numbers are really the focus in the story, qualify with " about," " more than," or " approximately." This rule is based on typographical considerations.

Do not open a story with a question; the reader does not want to be asked something, but to be told something. Moreover, as the question is usually a rhetorical one, the effect is artificial.

Do not open a story with the weather unless the weather itself is the crucial point of the story; the lead should give action, not background. The temptation to " play " the weather is particularly strong in reporting outdoor sports events. It seems very much an element in the spectator's enjoyment of the game, but the reader is more interested in the outcome than the surroundings.

Do not open the lead with a participial phrase. If the information is not important enough to be the principal clause of the sentence, it is not important enough to hold the leading position. A great many leads, however, do begin with participial phrases, as such phrases furnish an easy means of combining several diverse ideas into a sufficiently brief whole.

Do not begin with a direct quotation. The only real objection to this form is that it is the easiest possible lead on many stories and consequently is likely to become a fixed habit.

Although most fixed rules are of limited application and

may be broken on occasion, there are a few principles of lead writing which have general validity. The following warnings should be strictly heeded by the writer of a news story:

1. Do not avoid the simple and obvious lead. Striving for originality is likely to lead away from the point instead of striking it directly. Nine stories out of ten can best be introduced by a simple *who-what* lead. The more important the story, generally speaking, the more simple and obvious the lead will be. When President Harding died, the great majority of the papers throughout the country opened the story with the simple statement: "President Harding is dead." If something of great importance happens to some one of great importance, there is no problem of what to say about it. The only course is to go ahead and say it. This bare lead, however, can be overworked, and is likely to be, because of its impressiveness. It is appropriate to say, "President Harding is dead," but to make a lead paragraph of the statement, "John Doe is dead," is a bit too overwhelming. The same type of lead in the case of John Doe is more likely to read, "John Doe, pioneer merchant residing at 00 Blank Street, died at his home at two o'clock this morning."

2. Do not fall into lead habits. Not all stories are alike; neither should all leads be alike. Vary the structure of your opening sentences, seeking not the easiest but the most telling way of making the point in each instance.

3. The lead is by far the most difficult portion of the story to write. More than half of the news writer's allotted time is often spent in seeking for the right lead. The reason is not far to seek. There are just two requirements for the lead, and these two are apparently contradictory: It must be brief, and it must be comprehensive. It must say the utmost possible in the fewest possible words. In seeking

to make the lead comprehensive, to give the entire gist of the story, the writer all too often finds himself involved in a long periodic sentence encumbered with qualifying clauses, containing a number of loosely related ideas, through which the reader can hardly track his way without a guide. It is, however, just as important that the lead should be comprehensible as that it should be comprehensive. Three short sentences are three times as effective as one long one — and three times as hard to write. As the United Press Manual puts it: "The short sentence is one of the most effective things in newspaper writing. Nothing so ruins a story as a lead of seventy or eighty or more words in the first sentence."

Although the lead is the most difficult part of the story to write, it carries its reward. The time devoted to it is well spent. For a good lead almost invariably guarantees a good story.

EXERCISES

1. A prisoner made his escape from the penitentiary by hiding in a coffin in the prison morgue. One paper used the *what* lead (the fact of a prison break) and another used a *how* lead (concealment in the coffin). Which is more effective, and why?

2. Analyze the leads in the current issue of your local paper. How many begin with *who? What? When? Where? How? Why?* How many are freak leads?

3. Find an example of a lead which is too long, and show how it could be cut.

4. Find an example of a story in which you think the wrong lead was chosen, and rewrite it according to your own idea.

5. At a class meeting to elect officers the election was hotly contested, and the losing faction accused the winning faction of stuffing the ballot box. What is the lead in writing such a story?

6. Report an actual club or class meeting. The meeting probably opened with roll call and reading of the minutes, followed by the business of the day. The minutes will be a chronological ac-

count of the previous meeting. How will your news story differ from the minutes? More than one person should take this assignment, and the different leads chosen should be discussed in class.

7. Organize the story of the Macbeth murder as you obtained it in the exercises on Chapter IX. Frame your lead.

XI

THE BODY OF THE NEWS STORY

It is not enough that a story should attract the reader's attention in the beginning; it must hold his interest to the end. Even though the lead has presented the most striking point, a summary of the material, or the climax of a series of events, the remainder of the story must fulfill the promise of interest made in the lead and not disappoint the reader with an impression of anticlimax.

Although the straight news story very often opens with the end action, it does not follow a backward course throughout. Most news stories which recount a series of events proceed chronologically after the lead. The news story which is an explanation of a situation will take the main points of the situation in order. The story with a general-summary lead will develop in further detail the ideas mentioned in the first paragraph. When the reader's attention has been caught by a single striking detail in the lead, the rest of the story will fill out the surrounding circumstances, placing the lead idea in relation to the whole of which it is a part.

The good news story does not "go up like a rocket and come down like a stick." It is thoroughly organized throughout. Because they must often be cut by the exigencies of space, news stories are sometimes written to "peter out" at the end so that the final paragraphs can be lopped off without being missed. This technic is convenient to the

make-up man, but the main purpose of the story is not to save work for the composing room but to interest the reader. If the story gradually fades out as it proceeds, the interest of the reader will fade with it. In addition to the major climax of the lead the news story should also have a minor climax at the end and not give the impression that the reporter simply stopped writing because he had run out of material. The best newspaper story is one so written that nothing can be cut without the loss of something vital to the development of the story.

Not all stories, of course, can be treated with the same amount of detail. But the poorest possible way of shortening a story is by simply slashing out paragraphs. For this reason the reporter should learn to " write to space." If he knows that the story must be told in a certain number of words, he will plan it accordingly and not overload one part of it with detail while skimping other portions, or filling out at the end with the least important items because he began by crowding the most vital elements.

The newspaper story is one of the most condensed forms of writing. Only the most ignorant outsider has the delusion that any editor has to hunt for " something to fill the paper." On the contrary, his problem is to find room for all the news which comes to his desk. For this reason the reporter is very often admonished against padding but almost never against over-condensation. City editors frequently remind their staffs that the news story of the creation of the world, as " covered " in Genesis, was told in about six hundred words; and that it is doubtful whether lesser and later events cannot be adequately recounted, if necessary, within the same space limits. The editor who tells a reporter to keep a certain story as short as possible and then finds seven unnecessary adjectives in the copy is obliged to do with his blue pencil what the reporter should have done with his

mind before the unnecessary words were committed to the typewriter.

There is no room for meandering in the news story. The practice of writing short sentences and short paragraphs is partly based on typographical considerations; because the lines of print in a newspaper column are short, a paragraph which would be of only average length on a book page presents a long, unbroken, and heavy appearance in the newspaper column. But the reason behind the demand for short sentences and short paragraphs in news writing is more than mechanical. The short sentence and the short paragraph prevent the intrusion of extraneous ideas and help to keep the story strictly to the point.

The news columns of the paper are the window through which the reader looks at the world. However strong the reporter's personal convictions on any topic may be, as a news writer he is the impersonal medium through which the news reaches the public. He is not permitted to editorialize — that is, to comment on the facts which he presents. This sharp distinction between its editorial and its news columns is one of the most striking characteristics of the modern newspaper. It is true that opinions themselves may be of news value; but they are always given as the opinions of the person written about, not of the person writing. It is the reporter's task to present the evidence, not to render a verdict.

Even in signed stories the reporter does not give his personal views and argue for them, as he might do in a magazine article. If he wishes to bring evidence of a certain nature before the public, he looks about for some one who can speak with a measure of authority and is willing to be quoted to the desired effect. The great majority of news stories are anonymous. Even when they are not, the reporter remains an intermediary between events and the

reader, and as such he maintains an attitude of impartiality. The paper is not his personal mouthpiece; rather, he is the mouthpiece of the public.

For this reason it is extremely useful for the reporter to build up a circle of persons who may be consulted on questions of news value. Sometimes he will establish relations of such confidence that he has only to suggest the point of view to be expounded, and the authority consulted will allow the writer to develop it according to his own judgment. Needless to say, this putting of the story into some one else's mouth is allowable only when the greatest care and discretion are used not to put into the mouth of the person quoted any opinions which he does not hold nor to express them in any way to which he might object. One such abuse of confidence will forever close that source of quotation for the future and will probably close other similar sources as well. In general, such a method is open only to the reporter of experience who has established a close relation of confidence with his sources.

Despite the restrictions of impersonality and condensation, newspaper stories offer opportunity for great variety of treatment. They may be matter-of-fact or colorful. They may be a single paragraph in length, or in a story with continued news development over a period of time they may resemble a serial. They may be narrative, descriptive, expository, or argumentative in type.

The majority of news stories are narrative because most news is a record of events. But the covering of a state fair, an art exhibition, the opening of a new airport, or a shipwreck may be largely descriptive. The news of inventions or discoveries, the report of a lecture, an interview with a distinguished visitor, are primarily expository. The report of a trial or a city council meeting where opposing views are expressed partakes of the nature of argument in so far

as the material itself is argumentative — but the reporter in this case must remember to let the principals do their own arguing and not to take part in his own person.

Not only events, but the emotions to which they give rise are human facts and as such find their place in the news story. In being impersonal it is not necessary for the writer to be colorless. The news value of many stories, in fact, lies more in their emotional tone than in the intrinsic importance of their contents. There is room in the newspaper for tragedy, comedy, and melodrama. Other things being equal, the story with a pronounced emotional tone is more interesting than one which does not touch the feelings of the reader at any point. The emotional tone of a story should be consistent throughout and should be appropriate to its subject. Tragedies may have their moments of what the dramatists call comic relief, but the comic aspect should not be played in the lead nor developed disproportionately in the body of the story. More often than not, it must be sacrificed altogether in the interests of brevity and consistency.

As a matter of obvious good taste, subjects such as death, injury, insanity, physical deformity, and suicide are not to be treated in a flippant and jocular manner. Rather oddly, divorces are a frequent exception to this rule and are often made the subject of jocular news stories, even though they are the outcome of domestic tragedy. The humorous news story is almost always short. The reporter with a gift of humor takes a brief, unimportant paragraph and enlivens it to make what is known as a freak.

The freak is a very short news story, unimportant in substance, but striking or unusual. It is often presented on the front page with a special or freak head, in bold-faced type, in a box (a line border), or in some similar fashion to attract special attention. The freak story is so widely popular that the United Press in the book of directions

issued to its correspondents emphasizes the value of "the short, light, humorous story of 100 to 250 words to leaven the mass of the more serious news which must of necessity be carried. The more of these lighter veined 100 to 200-word boxes we can obtain, the better."

Dana's famous quip that "if a man bites a dog, it's news," is more nearly a definition of the freak than of news in general. The epigram, in fact, has been the direct basis of innumerable stories of this type. The following, from the San Francisco *Examiner*, illustrates both a common typographical form and the character of the short freak story which harks back to Dana's dictum for its inspiration:

Believe It or Not—Suitcase Shoots Owner

THE accidental discharge of a revolver that had been packed in a suit case and placed in the front seat of an automobile yesterday sent Marmouth Osmon, 39, of 1211 Eleventh avenue, Oakland, to Highland Hospital with a bullet through his left leg. Osmon was moving, he said, and threw the suit case into the car, climbing in after it. Before he could start the car the gun went off. The wound is not serious, physicians said.

The incidents susceptible to light and whimsical treatment are innumerable. The foregoing example was given straight news treatment in the body of the story, but often the freak is developed in equally brief but less matter-of-fact fashion. A horse stumbles into a sewer hole — a drab and trivial occurrence. But the story was carried by the Associated Press

from Chicago and widely published in the following freak form:

Mare Slumbers While Gang Drags Her From Sewer

CHICAGO, Sept. 14 (AP) — Dolly, the old gray mare, ain't what she used to be on account of being blind. The elderly nag still is able to drag around the wagon of Lawrence Tonczeik, but she hasn't much pep.

Dolly had no idea there was a 15-foot sewer hole in the middle of Oakley avenue last night. She dropped into it.

Firemen worked two hours to get her out. The proceedings were such a bore Dolly went to sleep.

Once salvaged, she awoke and galloped away into the night.

The "color" story, as its name indicates, strives to give the reader not merely objective facts, but their emotional color. The stronger the emotional reaction inherent in the story itself, the more safely it can be left to convey its own effect. Nowhere more than in the color story is the reporter tempted to play upon the heartstrings of the reader, and in no other type of story is the force of deliberate understatement more manifest. The old-fashioned "sob story" is more likely to excite ridicule than sympathy. It is a safe rule that the more deeply the reporter himself is moved by the story he is called upon to write, the more scrupulous he must be to exercise emotional restraint and under-write, rather than over-write it.

The following story of the execution of four negroes is a masterpiece of emotional economy, rigid control, and corre-

sponding impressiveness. It is brief, it contains all the information necessary to a straight news story, and it tells the facts with the utmost simplicity. It achieves a tremendous emotional effect with the use of only three descriptive adjectives *old, deep,* and *great.* Notice how the theme — the singing of the hymn — announced in the lead is carried out in the body of the story.

" Milledgeville, Ga., Jan. 18. — Four negro murderers died in the electric chair of the state prison today. The condemned men sang 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' until the strains of the old plantation song ended with the electrocution of the last to die.

" As the old spiritual rang out from the deep voices of the condemned, Marshall Reddick, killer of a Manchester, Georgia, police chief, edged away. As guards took him to the chair he continued to sing on until the current shook him. The quartet became a trio at 10:24 A.M.

" ' Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home,
A band of angels comin' for to carry me home.'

" Then Clarence George, Atlanta, convicted slayer of Pat Daugherty, another negro, was taken away. His great voice boomed out in unison with the two men he left behind, until the current was turned on and he died at 10:28 A.M.

" Ed Capers, also convicted for Daugherty's murder, next was summoned by the guards and died at 10:47.

" Will Gillam sang on alone:

" ' I looked over Jordan and what did I see
Comin' for to carry me home?
A band of angels — '

" At 11:04 A.M. death stopped him and the prison was silent again."

A single news event may have continued developments from day to day instead of being complete when the story first breaks. A senate investigation, a criminal trial, the

search for a missing plane — in short, any occurrence which covers more than one day — will naturally be related in successive stories on the same topic. After the story breaks, the further stories are called " follow " stories.

A reporter may be able to write a good initial story and yet lack the sustained enthusiasm to " keep the story alive." Each follow story must be complete in itself, with a lead featuring the latest developments. It does not contain a long recapitulation of preceding events, for the reader wishes the news to be fresh and does not care to be taken back over what he knows already. Yet the follow story must be so constructed each day that the reader who picks it up at that point will understand the entire series of events which have led up to it. For that reason, close to the lead will appear a brief summary showing what the entire story is about. Even if a story has held first place on the front page for days or even weeks, the assumption cannot be made that it is already familiar to everyone. To make this repeated review brief yet clear and to keep it from becoming stereotyped is one of the most difficult factors in writing an interesting follow story.

There can be no lapses in this type of continued news story. It must not only be continued but continuous. Sometimes there is a gap in the actual sequence of events. For example, unfortunately for the reporter, court will be adjourned over Saturday and Sunday during the progress of a trial; but the paper does not thereupon drop the story and pick it up again on Monday. The reporter, in newspaper parlance, must " nurse the story along." It is not enough that he should watch events as they happen in such a case. He must seek the news as well as follow it, perhaps by digging up new angles to stress, interviewing persons who figure in the story, or finding out from attorneys or others advance information on the probable progress of the main story.

Even during a single day events may move so rapidly that additions must be made to the story for publication in later editions of the same day's paper. Sometimes the situation will change so completely that an entire substitute story must be written. The new story must not seem a direct contradiction of the old but must show that the revised version is due to the march of events or the securing of hitherto unattainable information. The substance of earlier reports will be embodied in the story, with an explanation of the circumstances which have led to their revision.

More often it is not necessary to rewrite the entire story. The fresh matter is then presented in the form of a new lead to the original account. It is not, however, merely attached to the story as it stands. The first lead is stricken out and the information contained in it is rewritten as part of the body of the story. Usually several paragraphs are thus reorganized before the old story can be taken up at a point where it fits in with the new material without an appearance of patchwork. The new lead, of course, must fulfill the requirements already laid down in the discussion of leads.

Although all copy goes through the city editor's hands and in stories requiring careful handling may be referred to the managing editor for final judgment, it is the primary responsibility of the reporter to avoid writing anything which might possibly be construed as libelous. It is not enough that the story should be accurate. The reporter may give an exact quotation of the words of his source of news, but if the statement quoted is itself libelous the paper will be held responsible. Neither is it sufficient that the paper could win a libel suit if brought, for litigation is expensive. Occasionally, in stories of great importance, usually involving questions of fundamental policy and genuine public interest (for example, the exposure of corruption in public office), the paper will deliberately risk a libel suit. But in such

cases the risk is taken with eyes open and is not forced by carelessness and lack of judgment on the part of the reporter.

The reporter therefore "leans over backward," in his avoidance of statements to which by any stretch of the imagination exception could be taken. An attorney arguing a case in open court may make remarks which would be blue-penciled out of the newspaper report of his argument. Charges made against individuals, unless they are a matter of public record, must be quoted with extreme care; and the name of the individual thus privately accused is almost always omitted. This caution is responsible for the use of the word *alleged,* which makes such frequent appearance in the newspaper vocabulary, and for the qualifications surrounding the reports of legal proceedings. Even a confessed murderer cannot be referred to as a murderer but only as one charged with the crime, up to the time that he is convicted by the jury. So strict is this rule that even after the verdict he is not "Jones, the murderer of Smith," but "Jones, convicted of the murder of Smith."

The general public, which sometimes assumes that newspapers contain lax and exaggerated statements, has little idea of the care which the reporter is required to take, not only to verify every statement announced as a fact, but to guard against the use of any words to which offense might be taken. One paper was sued for libel because of the word *threw* in the sentence, "he threw a roulette game." Another reporter allowed himself to state as a fact his inference that three men arrested in a prohibition raid would be tried on the third Monday in January. The report of the arrest itself was substantiated by police records and was therefore allowable. The regular term of the court for trying such cases was held on the third Monday in January. But, because no records said that this case would be tried at that time, the statement that the men would be tried was

held actionable by a Virginia court. The term *dope fiend* is actionable *per se,* an Iowa court has decided. Words such as *swindle* and *gouged* have been made the basis for libel suits against the paper in which they were used.

A Georgia judge in a recent decision ruled that " to make the defense of privilege complete, good faith, an interest to be upheld, a statement properly limited in its scope, a proper occasion, and publication to proper persons must concur." To this summary may be added the decision of the Texas Court of Common Appeals in reversing a verdict of $15,000 against the San Antonio *Daily Express,* which concluded with these words: " The right of a citizen to have his good name protected from libelous publications is indeed a valuable one, not to be lightly disregarded. But the upholding of the law is likewise sacred, and the right of newspapers to make reasonable and fair comment and criticism upon matters of public concern for the general information is at all times to be protected and never denied."

The line where the proper freedom of the press ends and the restriction imposed by the libel laws begins is often a delicate one. In most stories affecting only private individuals and not touching on matters of public policy that line is not even approached at a considerable distance by the reporter in writing his story. Legal considerations aside, the newspaper wishes to retain general good will and avoids, in so far as possible, statements which would bring complaint from the persons concerned, even when no legal action would be contemplated.

EXERCISES

1. Select from the paper a story which interested you. What influenced you to read it through to the end?
2. Find if you can a story which appears to " peter out " at the

end. Can you suggest a revision which would give a more forceful ending?

3. Complete the news story on the Macbeth murder.

4. Write a new lead on the above story for a later edition of the same paper after the arrest of the grooms, assuming that their fingerprints were found on the dagger.

5. Write a follow story on the Macbeth story based on the banquet scene.

6. List the five stories which interested you most during the week. Were they interesting chiefly because of content or treatment?

7. Take a long story in the paper (a column or more) and shorten it by one half.

XII

THE FEATURE STORY

The feature story, as its name indicates, finds its place in the news columns because some special element or feature of it is of interest rather than because its subject matter is important news. Any story which is interesting because of its treatment rather than its material is of the feature type.

The distinction between a straight news story and a feature story is not absolute. In fact, every feature story in the news columns (as distinguished from features in the magazine section) has a news element as its point of departure to justify its publication in a particular day's paper. This is its main difference from a magazine article of the same length. A training in news writing is essential to successful feature writing — a requirement often overlooked by the outsider who tries to break into newspaper work by offering feature stories to the paper for publication. For example, an article telling how to make a Japanese garden is not a newspaper story; but Mrs. Amanda Smith's Japanese garden with names and pictures, a stressing of elements of the unusual, and direct quotation of Mrs. Smith's experiences and method of transplanting a bit of the Orient to her home town, might be developed into a feature. In other words, the newspaper story, whatever its type, must be particular, concrete, and localized.

The feature story at one extreme approaches the straight news story, differing from it only in the emphasis on treatment rather than on content; at the other extreme it approaches the personality sketch, the descriptive article, or

even the book review. It therefore gives almost unlimited scope to the ingenuity of the writer. Since the actual news value is subordinate, it is not necessary that the facts on which the feature story is based should be of recent occurrence, provided they have not hitherto been called to the attention of the general reader.

The human interest story in the restricted sense belongs to this type. The enterprising reporter is constantly on the alert for odd or moving incidents which, though slight in themselves, lend themselves to feature treatment. So great are the potentialities of the feature story that sufficiently striking treatment may bring it into the company of the main news stories of the day, with a top head on page one.

The variety of topics lending themselves to feature treatment is so great that classification is almost impossible. The following examples are given in the order of their closeness to the straight news story.

An inquest was held on the deaths of nine suicides. None of the persons dead was prominent in the community, nor were the circumstances or the manner of death in any of the cases unusual. Each had been dismissed with an inch or two in reporting the fact of death. The only unusual feature in the content of the story was the large number of inquests of this character held on the same day. This was made the basis for a story which looked behind the bare facts of these nine lives and strove to analyze the reasons for despair and the methods chosen. The lead was as follows:

" In a big, carpeted room six men sat listening to nine stories — stories of mystery and tragedy, of which only the final fragmentary chapters were told, brokenly, haltingly, or indifferently by the single-file procession of narrators. For the six men were the coroner's jury, sitting in inquest yesterday over nine men and

women who had written 'finis' to their own lives. When the nine stories were all told, with the strange momentary meeting in one room at one hour of personalities which had never touched in life but were joined in that word, 'finis,' the mystery and the tragedy remained — the 'why' that lay behind that final gesture."

Although this lead is descriptive and establishes an emotional tone, it contains the elements of a straight news lead, establishing the *who, what, when,* and *where.* The story does not open with a general inquiry, why do people commit suicide? On the other hand a straight news story would have stated the bare fact that nine people had killed themselves. The story is of the feature type because it uses the facts as illustrative; they do not constitute the main story. The body of the story takes up the factors of age, motive, method, the leaving of notes, and similar questions. These general considerations are made vivid by direct quotation of those testifying at the inquest. The concluding paragraph runs:

"The end of nine stories? Nine unfinished stories, rather. For there is no one to tell us why, among the many who take life's discouragements and difficulties as they come, these nine found the face of life intolerable — and turned away."

While the separate news items comprising this story were given small space, the feature story which connected them and made them the basis for psychological treatment ran on the first page.

A gathering of gypsies was held to attend the funeral of a prominent member of the tribe. This was material for a feature story of almost pure color. Its news value was negligible; but the exotic customs of the gypsies, as contrasted with the habits of the ordinary citizen, made it an appropriate story for feature treatment. Such a story is almost wholly descriptive in character. Yet the impression

of narrative, linking it to the news story, is conveyed in the lead:

"Sacramento, July 14.—The clans have gathered. From Washington, from Oregon, California, from Illinois and Missouri, from Chicago and New York, in Fords and Cadillacs they have come—the last authentic nomads of the modern world.

"The gypsies have gathered in just such a dell as gypsies have used from time immemorial, on the bank of the American river just outside of Sacramento, to attend the obsequies of Mrs. Julia Adams, royal princess of Romany, who was buried according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox church and the customs of the tribe at 10 o'clock this morning."

This lead further follows the news story technic in that the story describes the gypsy camp on the day preceding the funeral, but post dates the story by mention of the funeral "this morning." The body of the story develops, not a general account of gypsy life, but a picture of this particular camp on this particular day:

"There is a red carpet on the grass where King Steve Uwanowich has pitched his tent. The women sitting under the awning, leaning against a couch covered with a heavy strip of aquamarine velvet, might be women of the ancient desert. Those who are young are beautiful, shy, moving with a lithe wild grace on bare brown feet. Those who are old, with faces carved out of dull brown wood, have lines of the eternal sky and the eternal earth graven on their faces. Their hips are incredibly bulbous under the full gathers of their long crimson skirts, and not even the pipes at which the old women puff rob them of dignity.

"We squat in a circle on the ground. They are courteously willing to answer questions—but there the trouble begins. They all answer at once, and all answer differently, in a furious hubbub of two languages."

The preceding paragraphs are purely descriptive. The characteristics of the gypsies are then brought out by di-

rectly quoted conversation which helps to sustain the impression of action. The story closes with the following paragraphs of comment which would form no part of a straight news story:

"The gong that is King Steve's voice again resounds. There is a strange and ancient gravity in his heavy face.

"'We are all born on the road. The road is our home. The road is all we know.'

"Eternal wanderers of the roads of the world! This time they have gathered in Fords and Cadillacs, summoned by telephone and telegraph. In the old days the news was carried by riders of the night roads on their swift ponies.

"Once they traded horses. Now they swarm over our car, urging us to sell it to them.

"It does not matter. Now, as then, arises the clamor of their instantaneous wild argument. Now, as then, the smoke arises from the camp fire. Now, as then, the dark-eyed women with silver-braceleted arms and loose, brilliantly patterned garments carry water and coffee to their men.

"'Ma'am!' bellows Steve, 'write that I am King Uwanowich from Los Angeles, king of 25,000 people!'"

The foregoing feature story, with a follow story on the funeral the next day, was given front page space because the theme was at the same time local in its news angle and unusual in substance.

There is a temptation to play a feature beyond its worth. It is a mistake to call attention to a molehill as if it were a mountain. The most successful story is the one which appears to tell itself. Most feature stories are rather short: a blind school boy who "saw" a football game by ear; a group of mothers who have formed a co-operative nursery school for their children; a policeman who cited a boy for driving past a traffic sign and then, finding that he was without funds, paid his bail so that he would not have to spend the night in jail; a cat show; the work of the identi-

fication bureau at the city hall; the unusual hobby of a prominent citizen — these and dozens of other topics have been made the basis of feature stories.

The short feature, like the news freak, is humorous or startling because of the sense of incongruity given the reader. Unlike the news freak, its subject is a situation or condition rather than a series of events. The efforts of poultry growers to find a remedy for fighting among their stock, for example, was taken up by the country correspondent of a city paper as an innovation of "poultry psychology" among farmers. The source of information was the county farm adviser, who almost certainly had no idea that his cut-and-dried report would be revamped in an entertaining manner. The story began as follows:

"Hayward, Sept. 16. — Following the lead set by national poultry experts and agencies, southern Alameda county is prepared to make a careful study of poultry psychology, with an aim to improving many existing conditions, particularly the wave of cannibalism that has reached a serious point.

"This is the announcement of J. Murray Davison, assistant farm adviser. The study of poultry psychology will be carried on with all the diligence and thoroughness of child psychology, with good results expected, Davison said."

Even the review of a book may be made the subject of a news feature, if the author is a local resident, or if the book contains startling statements of general interest from an authoritative source, which therefore qualify as news. The technic of the newspaper story of this character differs from that of the ordinary book review in that the lead, as in the news story, must contain a statement arresting the attention of the reader, not a mere description or announcement of publication. There must also be a reason for printing the story here and now. The same technic applies to the covering of a lecture. Instead of repeating the points in order and with an approach to completeness, as if taking

notes for classroom use, the salient points are played in the lead.

Robert H. Lowie's book *Are We Civilized?* was thus made the subject of feature treatment in the news columns of the Oakland (California) *Tribune.* The University of California, where Professor Lowie teaches, is at Berkeley, which is an adjoining city to Oakland.

Modern Man Still a Savage U.C. Scholar's Book Claims

BERKELEY, Sept. 16. — Civilization is not progressing, the human mind has not changed since prehistoric times, and man is still a savage.

That's the picture painted by Prof. Robert H. Lowie of the University of California anthropology department in a new book, *Are We Civilized?* which he has just written.

"Is the game worth the candle?" asks the university scientist after he has drawn the general conclusion that "man has marred his legacy of gold by binding it up inextricably with a heritage of dross."

"Riding on express trains is no sign of a higher mental development," declares Prof. Lowie, whose book is the result of a quarter of a century of study of primitive and modern civilizations.

The mere possession of a large mass of organized knowledge does not mean that a people is extending its culture, according to Prof. Lowie. Lowie points out, in his book, that:

"Man has forged ahead of the ape by passing on his experience to the next generation. He has piled up one means after another, not only for surviving but for surviving in greater comfort. However, he mars his legacy of gold by binding it up inextricably with a heritage of dross. Posterity learns to chip a stone knife and to chop off a finger joint without mourning or prayer. Firearms shoot down game and human beings. Rulers elaborate laws for large states and devise torture chambers. Biologists study heredity and then try to tinker with human beings.

"The result is largely to nullify the good achieved. As if Life were not an inexhaustible source of ills, man gratuitously adds to his load. The struggle is no longer merely one of adaptation to nature, but largely with 'the trolls that infest our hearts and brains.' Is the game worth the candle?"

Statements of those concerned in an event may be part of a straight news story, but the interview is also one of the most common forms of the special feature. Sometimes the news value of the interview rests primarily on the " news personality " of the person interviewed, sometimes on the subject of his special knowledge, sometimes on a combination of both elements. Interviewers and readers were disappointed when Lindbergh insisted on discussing nothing but aviation when talking to press representatives, because his " celebrity appeal " had far out-distanced the appeal of the subject on which he was qualified to speak as an expert.

The feature interview, as distinguished from an interview as part of a news story, is usually obtained from persons who are willing to talk for publication. There is less frequent need of overcoming initial antagonism or reluctance, except in the case of specialists who have a low opinion of the intelligence of newspaper writers and fear that they will be made ridiculous by a garbled quotation of their remarks. In getting an interview, as in getting a news story, the reporter should impress the " subject " with his carefulness, reliability, and accuracy.

Notes are more generally admissible during the progress of the interview which is to be used as a separate story than in the gathering of statements for a news story. Since the interview is usually sought from a man or woman already famous, the subject is in most instances accustomed to speaking for publication. Of course, if he is nevertheless made nervous by the notebook, his preference must be respected.

The famous person is usually a busy person, who is willing to give what is wanted but does not desire to waste time in beating about the bush. In addition he may be ignorant of news values. The reporter should therefore have a definite scheme of questions blocked out in advance. He should

have an idea of the probable development of the story, always bearing in mind that his plan may be upset if he discovers better material of a different nature from his expectations.

Often, unless the speaker is extremely newspaper-wary, he will in informal conversation make an extreme or sensational statement which, on second thought, he will frantically telephone the office to omit. Such statements, of course, are just what the reporter wants. He can usually get them in a presentable form, and at the same time inspire confidence, by a warning question, "Are you willing to be quoted as saying so and so?" It is far better to get the statement in a form suggested by the reporter, with express permission, than to have to face objections later.

The celebrity's fame may not be based on considerations which make for the most interesting newspaper story. In that case the questions asked will be on topics which are known to have news appeal. For example, an interview with Helen Wills, not on tennis, but on the changing customs of modern youth, was cabled from London and published widely in the papers of the United States. The celebrity from Europe can almost always be induced to comment on prohibition. A woman celebrity is likely to have views on women's opportunities, "marriage versus career," and kindred questions. The noted writer or actor probably has opinions on the movies and the talkies as they affect literature or the stage. Interviews of this class are written with a light touch and a spice of informality.

Contrasted with the interview having celebrity value is the interview important for the subject matter rather than the person. Discoveries in the fields of science, medicine, and archeology are of wide general interest if they can be presented in an entertaining and non-technical manner. But with rare exceptions the real specialist has no idea of being

entertaining and is technical with every breath. Needless to say, before approaching the specialist the reporter should attempt to become reasonably intelligent on the subject to be discussed. Although he has not the time to take a course in the subject or even to read a book on it, he can at least spare a few minutes to find out what it is all about. The specialist, on his side, is intelligent enough to know that his material must be simplified in order to be understood by the general public, and is willing to explain difficult points if the reporter frankly admits the limitations of his own special knowledge.

It is impossible to explain clearly to the public something which the writer does not understand himself. He should not rely on a mere parroting of technical phrases, for this kind of mechanical quotation is most likely to result in serious misconstruction. The phrases, strung together without a clear understanding of their significance, will, more often than not, falsify the intended meaning and make dull reading besides; for the reporter who fears to recast his material will not be able to translate what he has learned into a form readily grasped by the average reader.

It will not inspire confidence, but the reverse, for the interviewer to try to conceal his ignorance in order to meet the specialist on his own ground. It is often necessary to say frankly that you do not quite understand. The greater the scholar, the more sincere and patient will be his effort to make his meaning clear and the more he will appreciate intellectual honesty. In the interview, as in the news story, the reporter should be careful to have all names, initials, book titles, and the like scrupulously correct.

Whatever the substance of the interview, it is the reporter's business to learn the opinions of the other person, not to air his own. It is not his place to argue, still less to show off his own knowledge. If he disagrees, he should ac-

cept what is offered to him without betraying antagonism. If the person interviewed happens to express views held by the reporter, he may show his enthusiasm; but it is not in the least necessary for him to be hypocritical and express a sympathy which he does not feel. He may well be grateful for the opportunity to listen to the presentation of views at variance with his own — hearing the case for the opposition is excellent education. An interview that is fair and accurate will insure the good will of the person giving it. His good will is worth holding; for it is impossible to tell when the same person may be needed again, or how soon his favor may be valuable in aiding the approach to one of his friends or some one working in a similar field.

The newspaper symposium is a series of brief interviews commenting on a subject of current news interest. Sometimes a feature interview will furnish the basis for a "follow" story in the form of a symposium. Sometimes the subject of the symposium is suggested by a news item. The names chosen for the symposium should be (1) of local prominence, (2) of some authority on the special subject discussed, and (3) representative of diverse points of view. For example, a new educational theory may be discussed in this way by teachers and Parent-Teacher Association officials. A startling pronouncement on religion or morals may be criticized by ministers of various denominations. The findings and suggestions of a crime commission may be the object of comment by police and probation officers. Club women will usually comment on almost any subject of public interest.

The individual statements quoted in a symposium must be short and as definite and epigrammatic as possible. The reporter should build up a list of persons in various walks of life — ministers, lawyers, psychiatrists, public officials — with whom he has established relations of confidence and

whom he can therefore call upon at short notice to express their views.

The principles of the news story apply with equal force to the feature story. It must be interesting, it must have some local reference, and it must be new. As nothing is interesting which is not clearly understood, more or less erudite material can best be handled by the use of analogies which bring it within the range of ordinary life. For example, a doctor, after twenty years of experiment, discovered the cause of leprosy. A reporter was sent to interview him because it was rumored that he had actually slept with lepers in order to prove that the disease is not transmitted by direct contact. This, of course, would have made a sensational lead; but the story had to be reframed entirely because, unfortunately for the press though perhaps fortunately for the doctor, it turned out not to be true. The story was eventually played as a " detective story of science " and the twenty-year search for the elusive germ was compared at every point with the solving of a baffling mystery. In this way the real thrill of science was brought home to the reader who had never before heard of the long technical names given to the " suspects."

Direct quotation is more interesting, because more vivid, than indirect statement. If their ideas are correctly stated, few persons have any objection to the direct form of quotation even if it is not a verbatim transcript of their actual words. The direct quotation also lends itself to shorter sentences than does the indirect form. The English style of reporting speeches and interviews by a long string of *thats*, in indirect form, appears unduly drab and long-winded to American eyes.

The lead of the interview should follow as closely as possible the requirements of the news lead. The following lead was used in a " celebrity " interview:

"Abbé Dimnet, internationally famous French prelate, philosopher, and author, has three strong convictions about America. They are:

"Prohibition will never work.

"American men are repressed by their women.

"The American mind is governed by headlines and slogans.

"These opinions were expressed by the witty Frenchman, author of the philosophical best seller *The Art of Thinking,* when he arrived here this morning to lecture before the Forum."

In this interview the topics were suggested by the reporter in order to bring out an expression of opinion on controversial subjects of current interest. The lead indicates the celebrity value of the speaker and, by announcing his arrival in the city and his coming lecture, gives the news reason for quoting him at this particular time and place. The story starts off at once with a series of arresting statements, briefly phrased, which the body of the story amplifies. The effect is made more forceful by presenting the topics at once in one-two-three order instead of using only one in the lead and developing the others entirely in the body of the story.

This interview was followed the next day by a symposium of opinions from prominent women and prohibition leaders, and thus precipitated a good lively argument in the columns of the paper.

The feature story gives more scope to individual literary style than does any other form of newspaper writing. There is little room for the personal touch in the straight news story, which must simply relate a series of events. To be sure, the feature writer must express his personality only through his story, not directly; but that is the final form of self-expression for all writers. The news writer gets a story which already exists; the feature writer constructs a story out of its raw materials. The writer with the gift of

humor, the gift of finding the essence of drama in unlikely places, the gift of observing and interpreting the quirks of human nature can readily prove that if fact is not stranger than fiction it may yet be quite as interesting.

EXERCISES

1. Write a feature story on some phase of your student life. A boy joining the domestic science class or a girl the manual training or similar class for one session and writing a vivid, semi-humorous account would furnish material of this type. Another could be made of the " staged " incident in the exercises on Chapter VIII, showing the errors in observation made by eye witnesses to a scene.

2. Write a color feature story of a track meet, ball game or other athletic event, differentiating it sharply from the same material as treated in a straight news story.

3. Keep your eyes open, in and out of class, for a week and write as many short human interest stories and freaks as you can find. Remember that the incidents themselves need not be momentous.

4. Interview your science teacher on the value of a knowledge of science in everyday life. (Be careful not to " editorialize " in the manner of a theme, but choose a good snappy lead.)

5. If your town has student traffic cops, interview one of them on his daily experiences with pedestrians and motorists and write a short feature on the subject.

6. Write a feature story on the jobs taken by various students who are helping to earn their own education. (Remember to make it concrete.)

7. Interview various students and members of the faculty on their favorite hobbies and use the material for a feature story.

XIII

NEWS DEPARTMENTS

Certain classes of news are of such wide-spread and stable interest that they have been devoloped into special news departments. These departments differ from the reporter's beat in three respects. First, they are classified by subject matter instead of by news sources; second, the news of each department is assembled in one place instead of being scattered through the paper; and, third, a fixed amount of space is set aside for each department in advance, and the editor in charge is responsible for filling this space with news of a given character. Sports, finance, church and fraternal affairs, society and women's club activities are usually thus segregated. Of recent years, public interest in aviation has reached such a pitch that many papers have established an aviation department. Coast papers add a shipping-news department to the list.

Although each of these departments is under a permanent head, the reporter who can qualify as a specialist on any of these subjects in an emergency adds greatly to his value as a member of the staff. If he has definite interest and knowledge in a particular field, the opportunity for specialization will probably open to him in time.

American interest in sports of all kinds is so general that both national and local events are covered in detail in the press. If you will turn back to the analysis of the contents of " One day," published by the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin,* you will notice that ten different sports were in-

cluded in a single issue of the paper. National and international contests, such as the Davis Cup, Wimbledon, and national tournaments in tennis, national golf matches, championship prize fights, the World Series in baseball, and the "big games" in university football are considered of such general news interest that they are given leading positions on the front page and may even call for "Extra" editions. Some papers make it a rule that the chief sports story of the day shall appear on page one, and the news agencies endeavor to furnish at least one important sports story in addition to their general news each day.

The sports department is thus responsible for far more than a coverage of local amateur and professional sporting events, although its personnel is so selected that an adequate technical account can be given of events in all forms of sport practiced in the community. It is essential that the sports department should include competent reporters of golf, tennis, football, baseball, and fights, although of course several of these sports may be covered by the same individual. In fact, few papers can afford a separate expert in each field.

The sports section includes both news stories and feature stories. Many colleges and universities employ press agents who send out material of both sorts to the sports departments of the newspapers. Special correspondents from individual newspapers and from the news agencies form part of the camp following of champions in the major sports and cover the important matches. In addition, famous athletes write syndicated "columns" of advice on their specialties, which are distributed to the various newspapers. Many sports sections include a column of informal gossip of a semi-personal character, and an information bureau to answer the questions of readers. In short, the type of material presented in the sports section is so various that it almost con-

stitutes a newspaper within a newspaper, unified by its general subject matter. Because of this variety in training and experience, many sports writers have become nationally known general feature writers. Damon Runyon and Heywood Broun may be mentioned as contemporary examples.

The fundamental requirements of the sports news story are the same as those of any other news story — it must be accurate and it must be interesting. But both of these requirements present some special difficulties. Each game has a highly complicated set of rules which must be mastered by the onlooker before the actions of the players can be made intelligible. To the outsider, a football game comes very close to William James's description of a baby's consciousness of the outside world as " a big, booming, buzzing confusion," and a tennis match presents the appearance of two or four persons running dizzily about with magnified fly-swatters. If you will watch any game with which you are not familiar and then read a play-by-play account of the same contest in the newspaper, you will be astonished at the details you have missed.

The sports reporter must have quick observation, backed by knowledge which enables him to interpret what he sees, and an ability to co-ordinate his material so that the reader can reconstruct from his account an accurate and complete picture of what has occurred. Because the action is swift, complex, closely connected, and involves a number of persons moving at once, the achievement of accuracy and clearness presents a difficult problem. The selection of a definite point of view helps in giving the reader a distinct picture. In tennis, for example, each game can be oriented by the service. There is a serious discussion among sports writers as to whether football should be reported from the point of view of offense or defense. Opinions remain divided as to

the best general policy; but it is agreed that, whichever point of view is chosen, it must not be shifted confusingly.

A play-by-play account of any sports event inevitably involves the use of technical language — and all technical language is necessarily dull to the uninitiated. Since the sports story, like every other news story, must be not only accurate but interesting, an elaborate slang jargon was developed in order to overcome the curse of technicality and make the account vivid and picturesque. But this jargon, in turn, finally became so complicated as to be unintelligible to the general reader.

The present tendency is away from an extreme use of slang, which defeats its own ends by becoming as technical as the terms it has displaced, and toward an informal and flexible use of ordinary and intelligible English. Figures of speech which help to explain their subject matter vivify it for the reader; but a " frozen " figure of speech used in place of a direct term becomes mere technical jargon. Slang which degenerates into such stereotyped forms is a limitation, not an enlargement, of the color and resourcefulness of language.

To take an extremely simple example, nothing is gained by calling a ball a " pill," because everybody knows what a ball is; the reader is in no way helped to understand the game by the useless translation of terms. Slang was introduced into sports writing in order to mitigate the rigors of the technical sports vocabulary; when it merely substitutes one set of technical terms for another, it loses its reason for existence, which was to interpret the sport to the uninformed reader.

The best sports writers therefore use their linguistic privileges to achieve definite effects. Westbrook Pegler, for example, writes about prize fighting not only in a manner acceptable to " fans " but in a fashion that wins the attention of readers to whom the general subject of prize fighting is

without interest. This combination of special with general interest is the goal of all sports writing. It is a goal difficult of attainment because it is inherently artificial. The normal human being is touched in a vital spot by a " good " murder story because all of us are potential murderers or murder victims; the conflict of passions involved is directly linked with the situations of ordinary life. The drama of the sports story lacks this universal basis, for many readers cannot by the farthest stretch of the imagination envisage themselves as champions in any sport. The sports writer must use his skill to give the artificial conflict all the dramatic vigor and excitement of a fundamental human struggle. The result may be condemned as " ballyhoo " by the cynical; but if it is entertaining ballyhoo it has served a legitimate purpose, since entertainment is one of the needed elements of human existence, whether it finds its expression in art or in sport. The spectator's interest in sport is, in fact, psychologically akin to his interest in drama or music or to the reader's interest in fiction.

Unlike the general news story, the sports story may include critical analysis and comment as well as narrative. The strict injunction against editorializing the news is not applied to the sports story. The writer is allowed to express his personal opinions of the qualities and strategy of teams and players, somewhat as the book reviewer is allowed to criticize the merits of a book, or as the " expert " witness is allowed to give his conclusions as well as his observations in court. But this privilege of comment does not mean that the sports writer should allow bias and prejudice to color his account of events. Not only good sportsmanship but accuracy, the first law of newspaper writing, dictates that merit should be acknowledged regardless of the writer's sympathy. If the reasons for the result of a contest are analyzed, as they may be, the analysis should not partake of

the nature of an " alibi " for a losing team which holds the writer's sympathies. Similarly, to insist that a team is sure to win merely because it is the home team is not " patriotism " but a childish display of " wishful thinking." Enthusiasm for one side or the other is allowable, but it should never blind the reporter to his one supreme allegiance — his loyalty to the facts.

The lead of a sports news story follows the rules for any other news lead. Usually the natural lead will be the score which decides the result of the contest. Sometimes a sensational or decisive individual play is the most interesting feature, and will furnish the lead. Not often should any game or match be announced as uninteresting. To do so is to admit failure in one of the two essentials of every news story. It is the reporter's business to select something about it that *was* interesting and to emphasize the positive, not the negative elements.

The significance of a match in relation to other matches may be played as its leading feature. This form of lead, for example, was used in a baseball story which began:

" The Oaks may not have a chance to win the second half race of the Pacific Coast league, but they have not given up the idea of wanting to go places, and yesterday saw them trample over the Portland Ducks for a 10-to-2 and 6-to-3 victory to put a big dent in the hopes of the northern team finishing on top in the same race."

Both predictions and post mortems are instances of the editorializing or comment which are allowed to mingle with the news in the sports story. It is not permissible, for example, to foretell the outcome of a legal trial during its progress; such a procedure would be condemned as " trying the case in the papers." But prophecy is one of the most frequently exercised privileges of the sports writer. Such

predictions are always subject to human fallibility, and the wise prophet will not speak with too great a certainty.

Predictions are doubly dangerous if they are based on desire and prejudice. The reader has a right to assume that they are founded on an impartial observation of facts, plus the presumably expert knowledge of the critic. The forecast story should not be mere special pleading and advance cheering for one side or the other.

A typical forecast story was carried by the Associated Press from Kansas City on September 16, 1929. The lead announced that " football practice will officially begin today at all Big Six schools." The story continued with an account of the personnel and coaching in each of the six universities considered. A school or college community offers a variety of such advance material, of local or wider interest, on the progress and prospects of the home team or of individual players as they are observed and analyzed by the sports writer.

The résumé or post-mortem story differs from the " follow " story of the news columns in that a straight news story looks forward, not backward. A news story is " dead " when it fails to present new developments. There is no likelihood that it will be revived a year later — if it is, it will be in the form of an entirely fresh news development. There is consequently no point in reviewing past events except as background for current news, as when an official investigation follows a wreck, or a legislative body takes cognizance of an exposure of political corruption. But the same major sports events recur year after year, and for this reason a post-mortem analysis links the past to a definite future.

The résumé story in sports often combines forecast with post mortem. Lawrence Perry, national sports feature writer, thus sent from New York at the close of the tennis season a story which opened as follows:

END NEARS FOR VETERAN NET PLAYERS

Youngsters Will Be in Finals Next Year: Perry

By LAWRENCE PERRY

NEW YORK, Sept. 16. — In all probability, two veteran players will not soon again be the finalists in the national lawn tennis singles. Upon the crowd who watched Big Bill Tilden and Francis T. Hunter in their match for the championship on Saturday was the spell of those who watched the gods struggling in their twilight.

If the late national singles showed anything of real significance, it lay in the promise of emergence to outstanding positions of several younger players. By next year, it seems altogether likely, more than one of them will have come into his own and Tilden's long reign will be found finally to have ended.

The foregoing story is typical in several respects. In the first place, it is cautiously worded — "in all probability," "it seems altogether likely." Whether the author wishes

Tilden to win again or to be beaten, he does not permit his enthusiasm to run away with his judgment, nor does he pick a favored player as sure to win because he would like to have him do so. In the second place, the editorial nature of such a story is indicated in the headline, which runs, "End Nears for Veteran Net Players," with the bank, "Youngsters will be in Finals Next Year: Perry." The head thus indicates that the story is an expression of individual opinion. In the third place, this story, following recognized modern style, is couched in informal language, but in perfectly straight ordinary English. The beginning sports writer who tries to enliven his story or to demonstrate his sophistication by an extravagant use of technical slang is following a form already outmoded. The sports pages of today are written to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. It is the last desire of any department of a newspaper to limit the number of its readers unnecessarily. For this severely practical reason rather than for any idealistic concern with the purity of the English language, the use of an argot which would require an extended glossary to make it understood by all save an esoteric coterie of fans has been discontinued.

Public interest in financial news has increased so markedly during recent years that the space devoted to market news and reports often equals or surpasses that given to sports. A crash in the stock market is as sure of a leading place on page one as the report of a major sporting event. The financial section includes stock market reports from New York and the nearest local stock exchange, news of mergers, special dividends, industrial developments, and often a daily article by the financial editor. Outside material is received from the news agencies, brokerage houses, financial journals, and syndicates handling financial features.

The special aviation section is of even more recent devel-

opment than the financial section. The aviation editor is responsible for all news and special features emanating from the local airports. Such news includes not only special flights, improvements in air service, and color stories of various sorts but also the arrival and departure of distinguished visitors. The aviation editor establishes friendly relations with airport officials and representatives of commercial lines, who constitute valuable news sources.

The foregoing departments are based upon the readers' interest in a given subject matter. Other special news departments are founded on personal rather than topical interest. The society, club, and church departments, unlike the sports and financial sections, are strictly local; their value lies in the fame appeal. The reader of these local columns derives an additional pleasure from the fact that he can identify himself, directly or indirectly, with the persons of whom he reads. He may be himself the subject of the item, which gratifies a very normal ambition to be considered prominent among his fellows; or he basks in reflected glory because the names of those concerned are familiar to him. He either knows them personally, or he receives a vicarious gratification from reading of affairs in which, without too great a stretch of the imagination, he might participate. Because men often find sufficient gratification of the natural ego in their business relations, the pronoun *she* might be substituted for *he* in considering the club and society columns. In addition to catering to the name appeal, departments of this nature furnish announcements of more or less public meetings and report the activities of organizations in which the reader may be interested.

The church editor receives advance notices of church affairs and frequently runs brief résumés of sermons delivered by the ministers of various denominations. The club editor prints announcements of club activities of various

sorts, covers club conventions, and uses the names of club leaders as the basis of stories carrying the name appeal.

The society editor is required to use both discrimination and tact in reporting social functions. Clubs and churches are public or semi-public institutions. Society news, on the contrary, derives its fame appeal not from the numbers included but from the numbers excluded from participation. The society editor must therefore be acquainted with the name-value which makes the wedding or bridge party of Mrs. de Smythe take precedence over the wedding or bridge party of Mrs. Jones. She must preserve an even and critical balance among the rivalries and snobberies of those whose interests are more or less limited to private social life; for these are also readers, and the fundamental responsibility of the newspaper is to its readers.

The days of exaggerated and extravagant description of social events are past. Society news now conforms to the general principles of other news reporting. The society editor is a business woman whose first responsibility is to her newspaper job. That job requires that she establish courteous and friendly contacts with her news sources since her particular news can " break " only in the form of information from those concerned. It does not require that she herself should be a social " hanger on," in dress, in manner, or in personal attitude. Any job for which one receives payment is worth doing to the best of one's ability; on the other hand, a sense of proportion is as necessary here as elsewhere, and to be dazzled by the social prominence of any news source is to forget that its value to a newspaper is of one sort and one only — as a source of news.

Accuracy of detail is of more importance, if possible, in the society department than in any other. Initials, the spelling of names, and the recounting of family relationships are of real moment to those whose claim to fame interest is

limited to purely personal concerns. The bank president may overlook mistakes in detail because he relates his personal affairs to the large world outside himself, but his wife will not. The successful club or society editor must be at the same time a diplomat, a sound psychologist, and a competent, self-respecting purveyor of news in her given field.

EXERCISES

1. Assign two members of the class to cover the same sports event, one of whom is familiar with the game and the other not. Compare their stories.

2. Choosing a sport with which you are familiar, write a forecast story on the activities of your school or college in that sport. (It is not necessary to choose a "team" game. If you are interested in tennis, watch the tennis material in your institution and comment on the promise shown by individual players.)

3. If your school or college engages in outside competition, write a résumé-forecast story relating the home team to its competitors. (Remember to make it analytical, not mere "ballyhoo" for the local team.)

4. Clip from your local paper (1) a sports news story, covering an event; (2) a forecast story; (3) a résumé story. Criticize all three for accuracy, interest, style.

5. Who is your favorite national sports writer? Why?

6. Assign a girl to cover a boys' sports event, and a boy to cover a girls' event. Compare the resulting stories in class.

7. Plan a "Club Column" for your student paper.

8. Is a "Society Department" advisable for your student paper? Why or why not?

9. Why is financial news of increasing interest to the general American public? (Consult your economics teacher.)

XIV

THE EDITORIAL

The attempt directly to influence public opinion, once regarded as a primary function of the newspaper, is now limited to the editorial page. The entire focus of emphasis has changed. The main duty of the modern newspaper to its readers is the impartial presentation of facts. Comment and criticism are rigidly excluded from the news columns. With this increasing emphasis on the recording of facts rather than the expression of opinion, editorial policy has influenced the news to a constantly decreasing degree. On the other hand, the news attitude of impartial recording rather than special pleading or preaching has influenced the character of editorials. The editorial of today is not a personal pulpit from which the editor or owner addresses his following, urging the reader to think and act as he is told. It has become a vehicle for interpreting the news, explaining its significance, and, on questions of broad general policy to which the paper is committed, reasoning rather than exhorting.

Critics of this tendency lament the declining influence of the editorial. They look back upon the era of personal journalism as the golden age of the American newspaper, and sigh that " there were giants in those days." It is undoubtedly true that the modern newspaper is no longer, and cannot be, an organ of personal opinion — not because editorial writers nowadays are cowardly or lacking in ability, but because conditions have changed.

Senator Arthur Capper, proprietor of the Topeka (Kan-

sas) *Capital,* speaking before the convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors at Washington, gave the following answer to the question: " Is the Editorial Page on the Way Out? "

" Certainly the page as a whole has gone through great transformation from an earlier day, the so often cited day of great editorial personalities," Senator Capper said.

" Yet it remains true today that readers of editorials are, as they were half a century ago, the more alert intellectually of newspaper readers. They are, as they have always been, the more thinking part of the people. In so far as this remains true, the editorial has not declined as a force in public affairs. It interests today, as it has always done, the reflecting citizen and consequently has its influence in determining opinion on public questions among a leading part of the people. Editorial writers in some instances may exaggerate this aspect of the influence they exert on public affairs, yet it is an influence that is a justification of the editorial, if it had no other.

" We admit and even glory in the fact that ' there were giants in those days,' yet the day of the great editorial personalities had its own errors and failings. Today we live in different times, in a news world of which it may be said generally that uncertainties have replaced certainties. Diversity and complexity have succeeded general optimism on religious, political, social, industrial, moral, and economic questions. It is not a time for dogmatism or the closed mind. The old time editorial writer, however effective for another age, would not fit well, and would perhaps not readily adjust himself, in an age of widening knowledge and of bewildering change, even shaking to their foundations long held beliefs, and the sense which is the most basic of all, that with all the advancement made there is still vastly more to be learned than is dreamed of in the old philosophy.

" Naturally, greater tolerance and good humor mark the present day editors.

" There is an error in the common conception of the newspaper editorial as the medium merely for expression of the opinion of the editor. The modern editorial is not opinion only. It includes analysis and clarification, often with no opinion given. To expound, to interpret, to clarify what is obscure, to abstract patterns, significance, and meaning from the chaotic medley of seemingly unrelated events — all this and more is part of the function of the modern editorial."

A direct comparison of the past with the present may serve to indicate that the Golden Age of the editorial has been somewhat gilded by the romantic glow of distance. The following gem entitled " The Female Heart " is quoted from the editorial page of the New York *Herald* for May 6, 1835:

" There is nothing under heaven so delicious as the possession of pure, fresh, immutable affections. The most felicitous moments of man's life, the most ecstatic of all his emotions and sympathies is that in which he receives an avowal of affection from the idol of his heart. The springs of feeling, when in their youthful purity, are fountains of unsealed and gushing tenderness — the spell that once draws them forth is the mystic light of future years and undying memory. Nothing in life is as pure and devoted as woman's love. It matters not whether it be for a husband or child or sister or brother, it is the same pure, unquenchable flame, the constant and immaculate glow of feeling, whose undeniable touchstone is trial. Do but give her one token of love, one kind word, or one gentle look, even if it be amid desolation and death — the feelings of that faithful heart will gush forth as a torrent, in despite of earthly bond or mercenary tie. More priceless than the gems of Golconda is the female heart, and more devout than the idolatry of Mecca is woman's love. There is no sordid view, qualifying half interest in the feeling. It is a principal characteristic in her nature, a faculty and infatuation which absorbs and

concentrates all the fervor of her soul, and all the depths of her bosom. I would rather be the idol of one unsullied and unpractised heart than the monarch of an empire. I would rather possess the immaculate and impassioned devotion of one high-souled and enthusiastic female than the sycophantic fawnings of millions."

A comparison of this "unsealed and gushing fountain" of adjectives and generalities with a modern editorial will show some of the differences between the present and the Golden Age. The following editorial "A Cowboy Rides" was published in the Oakland (California) *Tribune*, in 1929:

"He named his airplane *The Golden Hind*, after Drake's adventuring galleon. And he left a cattle ranch in Montana, a wife and children, that he might ride, for a few moments, in the paths of the sky with the heroes.

"What was it that called Urban Diteman, Montana rancher, away from his herds and the rolling plains? He sought no attention in advance, asked for no companionship or aid, but journeyed east to the Atlantic Coast and there assembled his airplane for a desperate endeavor.

"Had Diteman succeeded, he would have won a wide acclaim. Probably he was not looking for that. He was thinking maybe of another airman who flew alone over the Atlantic, visioning that ride into mystery, a day of flying over an ocean man has made small. That within him which prompted the naming of an airplane *The Golden Hind*, the call to adventure, whisper of romance, spirit of youth, or what one will, was strong enough to take him, in confidence and courage, from a cattle ranch in Montana out into the great unknown.

"A cowboy staked his all for a valiant ride; and who may say that in those moments of his flight and when he met the great adventure he was not rewarded?"

Both of these editorials are an appeal to sentiment. But the modern example is terse in expression and restrained in tone. It is directly based on a current news story, and from

the editorial itself the reader knows that Diteman was a Montana rancher who attempted a lone flight across the Atlantic and failed. It is impersonal in the sense that the writer brings out the emotional implications of objective, ascertained facts. There was a definite news reason for writing an editorial on this subject at this time: it was a subject of immediate interest to the reading public. It is specific, not general: the subject is a particular flight, not flying in the abstract.

The subjects of modern editorial comment are as varied as the topics of news treatment. The editorial may give the reader additional information, it may draw conclusions from news facts, it may suggest appropriate action to be taken on a situation of which the reader has been informed through the news, it may even be a whimsical or humorous comment on human foibles. In each case, however, the subject is chosen, not because the writer happens to be thinking about it, but because the reader has already reason to be thinking about it. Therein lies its fundamental difference from an essay or theme of the same length. If the honor system is being inaugurated in your institution, if entering students need to be informed as to its workings, if there is reason to believe that it is not being lived up to, these conditions or events would make an editorial on the subject in the student paper appropriate; but an essay on " Honor," unrelated to specific time, place, and events, has no place on the modern editorial page. The editorial is no longer a repository for generalities, with or without glitter.

The editorial on Diteman's flight is an example of the use of a news event for an editorial which brings out its elements of human interest or emotion; often an incident not in itself of great public importance has significance as an interpretation of some aspect of human nature. Probably the most famous and often-quoted of all editorials is of this

type. It was written by Francis P. Church and published in the New York *Sun*, September 20, 1897, in answer to a little girl's question, Is there a Santa Claus?

"We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great satisfaction that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of 'The Sun.'

"Dear Editor: I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say that is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in the The Sun it's so.' Please tell me the truth: is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

115 West Ninety-Fifth Street.

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to our life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginia. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable this existence. We would have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

"Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those

that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

At the opposite extreme is the editorial which assembles information on a news topic of national or international importance and indicates the conclusions to be drawn from events. Of this type is the editorial by Louis Isaac Jaffe, published in the Norfolk (Virginia) *Virginian-Pilot* on June 22, 1928, and awarded the Pulitzer Prize for this type of writing in 1929. It is entitled, "An Unspeakable Act of Savagery":

"As the Democratic hosts prepare to re-dedicate themselves anew to fairness and justice, the bustling Southern city in which they are to meet is disgraced by an unspeakable act of savagery. There is no other way to describe the performance of the eight armed white men who yanked Robert Powell, 24-year-old negro, from a hospital cot on which he lay with a bullet in his stomach, and hanged him from a bridge just outside the city. Powell was under the charge of killing a detective in a shooting match from which he himself emerged with an apparently mortal wound. In the event of his recovery he was headed for the courts. But to this Texas mob neither death nor justice was an acceptable arbiter. Nothing would satisfy them but a loathsome act of murder carried

out against a human being while he lay in agony with a bullet in his entrails.

"Houston, which is said not to have had a lynching in fifty years, is understandably stirred by this foul thing laid on its doorstep just when it was most anxious to show itself to the world at its cleanest. The City Council made an immediate appropriation of $10,000 for an investigation to be carried out by a committee representative of both races. A grand jury has been ordered to drop all other business to conduct an immediate inquiry. The Governor has offered a reward for the capture of each participant in the lynching and sent a special detail of Texas Rangers to assist the Houston police in the hunt. Apparently, the spotlight that beats on Houston at this particular time has had something to do with the energy with which the authorities have acted. Ordinarily, Texas justice proceeds in these matters with considerably less dispatch and excitement, but this is no time to inquire too closely into motives. One of the proudest cities of Texas has been polluted by one of the foulest forms of mob murder, and it is a matter for general satisfaction that the authorities are moving so energetically to repair the damage to Texas's good name. If the perseverance of the authorities is in keeping with their initial burst of energy, one or more of the group that bravely did to death a crippled man lying on a hospital cot may see the inside of the Texas penitentiary.

"The year that saw four months pass without a single lynching has now accumulated five of them. Five lynchings in six months represent a proportional reduction in savagery from last year's record of sixteen lynchings in twelve months, but the year is only half gone and no one may be too confident. We have come a long way from the dark days of 1892, when America celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of its discovery with 255 lynchings, but we have not yet arrived at that social abhorrence of this crime that must precede its practical extinction. When eight presumably decent and rational beings can gain the consent of their conscience to rob a hospital bed for the purpose of executing summary vengeance and when, as was the case a few days ago in Louisiana, two negroes are torn from their guards and lynched

because they were brothers of another negro who was accused of murder, it must be recognized that the rise and fall of the lynching curve is governed by racial passions that remain still to be brought under civilized control."

The newspaper editorial must be brief. For this reason it is usually limited to the making of a single point in a telling manner. It should not tell the reader what to think, but, even on controversial topics, should present him with the material and the steps of reasoning from which he is to draw his own conclusions. The personal opinion of the editorial writer is not sufficient of its own weight to carry conviction. He is at liberty to select facts to prove his point, but the reader has a right to demand that every expression of opinion should be founded on clearly stated and verifiable facts. The tone and organization of the editorial follows the general formula: "When you (the reader) are placed in possession of certain facts and understand their significance, you will by your own intelligence reach a given conclusion."

The following editorial from the San Francisco *Examiner* warns of the danger of fires resulting from the careless throwing of lighted cigarettes from automobiles. It does not exhort the reader to be careful. It paints a picture of the harm caused by the careless person and leaves it to the reader to choose not to be identified with the subject of the portrait.

"The real fire fiend of California is not a wild-eyed fanatic with a flaming torch. If he were, he would soon be caught. He carries a torch, but it is disguised as a cigar or a cigarette. And though he dashes madly about the country he travels in a machine and usually is well dressed. His clothes and his machine are additional disguises. His manners are apt to be as polished as his methods are fiendish. Farmers would know how to deal with a wild-eyed fanatic carrying a burning brand, but they are at a loss to cope

with the careless smoker armed with nothing more than a box of matches."

Like the rest of the newspaper, the editorial is addressed to the general public, not to a selected few. Because the education and information of the public are of all degrees, the editorial must be painstakingly clear and simple in expression — painstakingly, because it is infinitely easier to attempt to be impressive with a pedantic display of learning than to strip a subject to its essentials which the mind of the reader can grasp without previous technical training.

The newspaper reader resents a supercilious, heckling, or bombastic tone. His interest must be caught and held by a subject which directly concerns him emotionally, intellectually, or practically. He has not the time, the training, nor the patience for the formal marshaling of complex or subtle arguments, stodgy pedantry, or long-winded vaporings of "fine writing" whose chief reason for existence is the turning loose of the "unsealed and gushing fountain" of the writer's vocabulary.

Since the editorial deals with ideas, its organization must be logical. This does not mean that it proceeds according to a cut-and-dried formula. In fact, in order to avoid being bombastic or pontifical, its style is usually easy and informal. But the demand of brevity requires that every sentence should contribute directly to a point which is kept clearly in mind from the beginning.

The impersonal, objective tone of the modern editorial is reflected in the exclusion of the pronouns *I* or *we*. The spotlight is focused not on the writer nor even on the paper of which he is the spokesman but on the reader. Instead of "delivering a message" to the public, the editorial writer adopts the attitude of joining with the public in a discussion of affairs of immediate interest.

The student editor sometimes has a tendency to use the

editorial page as a repository for English class compositions unrelated to news events or as an opportunity to air his personal opinions. Some portions of the commercial newspaper are inappropriate to an amateur publication, but the editorial page is not one of these; and there is no reason why student editorials should not conform to the standards of modern editorial writing. The only real distinction is that the readers of the student paper are the student public instead of the general public. The subjects chosen for comment should therefore be such as concern student affairs and interests.

The following student editorial from the *Daily Californian,* published and edited by students of the University of California, concerns a topic used by many newspapers for editorial comment. In tone and treatment it compares favorably with the editorials on the same subject written by professional newspaper men:

College Sport Needs a Little More Frankness and a Little Less Agitation

For several weeks Heywood Broun has devoted his column in *The Nation* to a discussion of football, and in the current issue the report of the Carnegie Foundation comes in for its share of somewhat facetious criticism.

"The reformers are moving in precisely the wrong direction," he declares. "They would have the colleges weed out the pros and semi-pros . . . and if this is not feasible there are many who roundly declare themselves in favor of abolishing the sport altogether."

The remedy, as Mr. Broun sees it, is the reverse: "By all means let us have college football, but under the regulation that no member of any eleven shall be a bona fide student in good standing. This would end all the evils of which complaint is made."

While he offers his suggestions lightly, there are many who would side with his arguments. Open professionalism, to the

hypocrisy-haters, is better than the cloaked variety; and if pure amateurism is not feasible, then the cloak should be discarded. The athlete should enter his institution as a paid performer and should represent himself as such. So reason the hypocrisy-haters.

But we wonder if straightforward amateurism is impossible. Of course, if we hold to the dictionary definition of the word — "Amateur: one who practices a sport, not professionally, but for the love of it" — few football players would be included. Not many care enough for the game to enjoy the hard hours of practice that go with it.

But if they do not play for love of the game itself, they play for love of their school, for the regard of their coach and fellows, and for the glory that comes with exceptional performances. It is perfectly possible to have a squad of players none of whom are bought and paid for. If the players need money for their schooling they may secure it through legitimate employment, as they do here at California.

Mr. Broun's remedy is not needed. All that is necessary is an attitude of greater frankness on the part of some of our leading football colleges, and just a little less agitation on the part of the public press. After all, the Carnegie Foundation's report in many cases lacked foundation.

In order to reflect the entire gamut of news interests, the editorial page is usually the product of several writers under the general supervision of the editor, who distributes topics suitable for editorial treatment to members of the staff who are specially qualified to deal with them. The reporter who has special knowledge or interest in a given field, plus a faculty for terse and convincing expression of his ideas, is encouraged to offer editorials on topics of his own selection, even though he may not be regularly assigned to that task.

The technical requirements for a good editorial are few and simple. Choose a topic of current interest. Have some-

thing definite to say about it. Say it clearly, simply, and directly. Support arguments with evidence, not with adjectives.

EXERCISES

1. The following editorial was published in the Los Angeles *Times*. Read it carefully and then write a counter-editorial defending the standards and conduct of modern youth.

"TO SPANK OR NOT TO SPANK"

While we use big words like psychoanalysis and inhibitions, boys and girls loot vacant homes in Hollywood and seem intent on landing in jail.

While sins of the parents may be visited upon the children, it may not always be fair to refer the sins of the children back to the parents. It brings up the burning question recently discussed in the *Pictorial Review*, "To Spank Or Not to Spank."

Many of the live sparks kindling flaming youth have been traced back to the lax use of the hot hand applied to the blunt end of humanity. Some insist that spanking estranges a boy from parental sympathy. Others furnish sturdy arguments for the generous use of the birch.

At least the Montessori system has not renovated society.

Once the boy ate at the second table and got the neck. But he also got as good a perspective of life through the kitchen door as he now obtains through the windshield. Now he is apt to think in terms of cars and nights out. He has been worshipped as a child and exacts it as a man. He was supposed to do wrong and now he finds it hard to do right. He was never opposed—just something else was given to call off

his attention — and he never learned self-restraint. He still wants something better from society and the world is not as soft as parenthood. He is peeved at opposition and resorts to crime. The idea has been to give the child the rein, that he may learn to handle himself. He has learned few inhibitions and demands kowtowing from all. Property rights have not been taught him.

Some worthies of repute were developed in the old régime!

It may not be possible nor wise to return to the extremes of the fathers; but there are indications that the pendulum has swung to the opposite end of the arc. It is neither wise to jerk the colt's mouth to laceration nor yet give it its head.

2. The following editorial was published in the Palo Alto (California) *Times*. Note its sense of proportion, its informal tone, its absence of "rah-rah" laudation of the Stanford team. Write a student editorial on a similar sports topic.

STANFORD'S SKY IS ROSY

Saturday's football game in the Stanford stadium removed any fear that it would hardly be worth while for the university to open for the academic year next Monday. From first appearances the Stanford football team is going to be all right this year — and then some. There was a lurking feeling that with the departure of a number of men who gave the Cardinal eleven its startling effectiveness last year (when it was not startlingly ineffective) "Pop" Warner couldn't do the things that he did last year to create a winning organization.

'Sall right. Maybe "Pop" isn't going to do the same things. Maybe he

builds his plays around the men he has instead of fitting his men into the plays he has. There was a hint in Saturday's game that something of the sort is going on. Anyway, the football players who wore Stanford numbers Saturday were gratifyingly well-advanced towards being a football team. They played effective football, unlike the game that was played last year in many respects, and, most encouraging of all to Stanford partisans, they played with a delightful eagerness to make every possible inch forward when they were carrying the ball.

Well, that's very good. Football may not be so preponderantly significant among the activities of a university as some of us come to think it is along at this time of the year, but still if a university is going to play football it is better to have it play the best football. Stanford would survive with a football team easily beaten by its rivals — will doubtless survive with such teams many times in the future — but nevertheless it is wholly acceptable to have the Stanford varsity continue to be a strong one. It will make everybody hereabouts much happier.

3. Watch your local paper for news stories suitable for editorial comment, and write an editorial on a topic thus selected. Remember that a human-interest feature story as well as straight news may suggest an editorial.

4. Write an editorial on the value of extra-curricular activities in education. Remember to make it concrete and local in application.

5. Write an editorial supporting and one opposing the adoption of a campus or school uniform for girls.

6. Write an editorial on the proper place of athletics in educational life.

7. Look about you for an instance of kindness, courage, good

sportsmanship, or good citizenship among your fellow students. Use it for the subject of a human-interest editorial.

8. Write an editorial (a) defending organized athletics with its emphasis on creating a winning team (it must be proved of value to the student body at large, not merely to the participants); (b) defending the practice now in vogue in many institutions of abandoning outside contests and emphasizing general athletic training in which all students take part.

9. Write an editorial defending (or opposing) compulsory chapel in college.

10. Write an editorial defending (or opposing) student military training.

11. Write an editorial defending (or opposing) coeducation.

XV

EDITORIAL FEATURES

It has already been mentioned that ninety-five per cent. of the adult population read the newspapers, as compared with seventy per cent. who read magazines and fifty per cent who read books. One fourth of the entire reading population, therefore, depends on the newspaper not only for its knowledge of events or news but for the type of reading matter which the seventy per cent. and the fifty per cent find in periodicals and books. In answer to this need of a large number of its readers the modern newspaper furnishes critical and informative articles of the magazine type in a form adapted to special newspaper needs, and even publishes in serial form works of fiction and biography, and other books of wide popular interest.

Most newspapers include a daily magazine page or section. The larger papers publish in addition a Sunday section which is in effect a weekly magazine, containing fiction; popular articles on scientific, biographical, or historical subjects; and departments on health, household economics, fashions, child training, beauty culture, etiquette, bridge, puzzles — in short, on almost any topic in which there is a sustained public interest. Some of these features have purely an entertainment value, but entertainment as well as information is a fundamental human need. Others are written by genuine experts in the field who have the gift of clear and interesting presentation. The magazine department is an outgrowth of the old-time " Women's Page," but, as the

The Hearst Papers Advocate:

Imperative Duty of Congress Is to Pass the Education Bill

THE Hearst Publications, speaking for more than a million readers in all parts of the United States, respectfully urge the Congress to pass the education bill now before it.

... Department of Education with a Secretary of Education in the President's Cabinet.

... would put education in the Cabinet on an equality with agriculture.

It would co-ordinate the educational activities of the Federal Government, now scattered in several ... and ... independent agencies without any ... head directing head.

Just as the Department of Agriculture ... all ... agriculture in the several States, so the proposed Department of Education would conduct investigations on all educational matters to promote ...

Just as the Department of Commerce ... investigates commercial problems and administers for the whole ... forces and administrative ... for the ...

Just as the Department of Labor ... into the conditions under which men and women work, with a view to encouraging the improvement of those conditions, so the proposed Department of Education would inquire into the training requirements of various ... in connection with courses of study in the public schools.

Just as the ... of agriculture, labor, and commerce are further ... by ... of the several States,

Putting agriculture, commerce and labor in the President's Cabinet did not deprive a single State of the control within its borders of agriculture, ...

In the President's Cabinet district the school authorities of a single State of itself consist of education.

Control of education is a sovereign function of the State. And that control is guaranteed to the States by Article X. of the Constitution.

But the promotion of education is both a State and Federal duty. And its importance as a national duty was emphasized by Washington, Jefferson, ...

President Coolidge has now ... in regard to education when he urged the Congress to establish a Federal Department of Education with a secretary in the Presidential Cabinet.

Calvin Coolidge believes the progression of education to be a fundamental national ...

WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN AS A SEPARATE ... WAS AND A BLACK IN THE CABINET.

Wouldn't failure to pass the education bill be the severest rebuke the Congress can ... register, full of the desires of the public, but also indifferent to the advice and counsel of the great American Presidents who held THE PROMOTION OF EDUCATION TO BE AS MUCH THE DUTY OF THE NATION AS OF THE SEVERAL STATES?

The Eternal Miracle of Easter

... Easter is the one ... which ... has not ... or ... reached ... the ... heart ... towards the sun. Trees are ... their ... buds are ... ...

foregoing list of topics indicates, it has far outgrown its original limitations.

Most of the magazine material is bought by the paper from various syndicates. It is selected by the managing editor in consultation with the magazine editor, and the make-up or arrangement of the page or section is in charge of the magazine (or Sunday) editor. Some of the material, however, may be locally written. A feature story in the news columns may be developed by the addition of further related material into a magazine feature. A writer with an original idea for a department or with special training for conducting a daily magazine feature on a given subject may meet with such success that the feature will be taken up for syndication.

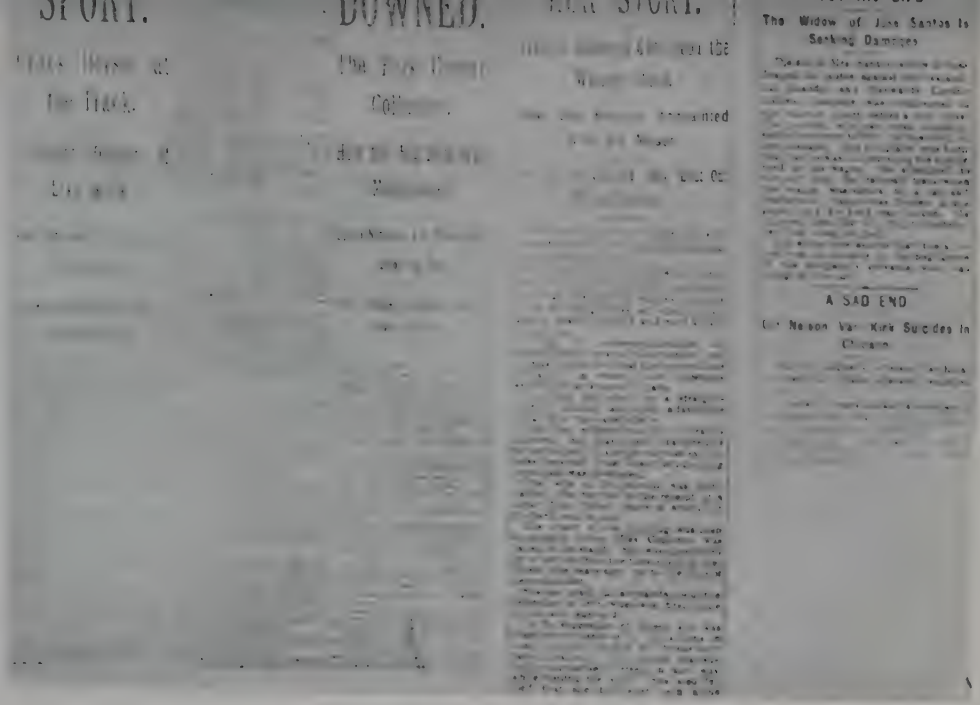
A syndicate is merely a distributing agency. Its organization is different from that of the news agencies, but its function is somewhat similar. Syndicates are commercial enterprises. They accept material from the author and sell it to newspapers, paying the author a royalty on each sale. This material has usually been a successful feature of the newspaper with which it originated or has the "name value" of a famous author or, in the case of serials, fiction or nonfiction, has been published in book form. Serials may also be written directly for newspaper publication. Comic strips are likewise included in the syndicated material. This material is then offered for sale to the newspapers, each paper, of course, having exclusive rights of publication within its territory.

Since the syndicated feature, story, or drawing is sold to many papers instead of one, and the author obtains a royalty on each sale, it is one of the most remunerative forms of newspaper work. On the other hand the newspaper is able to offer to its readers work of a quality which would be unobtainable if it alone had to pay the full price to the

author. Syndicated features differ from the other departments of the paper in two respects: since they are published in widely separated parts of the country, they are not local in reference; and, even when not serials in the strict sense of the word, they usually consist of a series of contributions, unified by the subject matter and in most instances by the author's name. An exception to this latter type is the "symposium" feature, in which interviews with famous persons on a selected topic are collected under a general heading.

Among their non-news features many newspapers include sections devoted to criticism of art, music, drama, and books. The first three have a certain element of news, as they announce and comment upon current local concerts, art exhibitions, plays, and motion pictures. Reviews of books, of course, do not have this local setting, but the newspaper book review differs from the literary essay in that comment is restricted to current publications. Newspaper criticism can be as well written and as profound as the ability of the writer permits, provided it is at the same time not stodgy nor over-technical.

Contrary to a fairly wide-spread popular opinion, the newspaper critic is never required to "puff" inferior productions under pressure from advertising interests. On the other hand, a constant habit of dispraise fails to give the reader what he wants from the department. Readers of newspaper criticism are not looking for discussions on esthetics so much as for a dependable guide which will help them to decide what is worth reading, seeing, or hearing. The most valuable newspaper criticism therefore indicates the general class to which a given production belongs, which will indicate the type of reader or audience to which it may be expected to appeal; it will further place the production's relative merit in that class. For this reason the critic should


SPORT.

DOWNED.

HER STORY.

The Widow of Jose Santos Is Seeking Damages

A SAD END

Dr. Nelson Van Kirk Suicides In Chicago

Headline Styles, 1893

Notice the popularity of one-word heads, the use of the period, the inclusion of minor words, "the," "is," etc., heads without verbs, heads which convey no definite information, as "Sport," "Her Story." New information is subordinated to old in the head announcing the widow's damage suit. Note the use of "suicide" as a verb (now discountenanced) in the bank to "A Sad End."

have fairly catholic tastes, or at least tolerance for tastes other than his own. It is obviously more helpful for the detective story enthusiast, for instance, to know whether a given example of this type of fiction is good of its kind than to have all detective stories condemned as beneath critical notice.

Some of the larger metropolitan newspapers, whose circulation includes a sufficiently large number of readers interested in books, publish a weekly book section which is in effect a magazine of literary criticism, with signed articles by distinguished writers as well as shorter unsigned reviews. Their art and music critics, similarly, are men and women of high standing in the critical world. George Bernard Shaw began his journalistic career as a music and dramatic critic, and his newspaper essays, despite the ephemeral character of most newspaper writing, still make stimulating and entertaining reading.

Most newspapers, however, must be content with stars of lesser magnitude than a James Huneker or a George Bernard Shaw, and the space given to critical reviews in any of the arts is too limited to allow learned and deep disquisitions on esthetic principles. Brief, honest, and unpretentious reports, interestingly written by a person reasonably well educated in the field, furnish the most successful type of critical department for the paper of ordinary resources. The reporter who has the requisite ability and interest in this class of writing is frequently given an opportunity to cover concerts or contribute book reviews. He will be most competent if he contents himself with building a good house instead of trying to construct an elaborate palace; the formal literary essay is inappropriate to the ordinary newspaper's needs.

Not because they are remarkable compositions in themselves, but because they are competent, workmanlike ex-

amples of the short newspaper book-notice, the following typical reviews are quoted from the New York *Herald-Tribune*. The subject matter of the first is a mystery novel; of the second, a book of memoirs; and of the third, a book of the informative type. In all three, the reader is given a clear idea of the contents and of the author's handling of his material, without too much intrusion of the reviewer's personal opinions. The primary object of reviews of this type is simply to indicate to the reader whether he is likely to want to read this particular book. The literary editor of the paper and the outside expert contributing signed reviews have wider scope, but the best apprenticeship for the reporter with ambitions to become a critical writer is to learn to do small things adequately, rather than to imitate the star performer.

THE SUBTLE TRAIL.
By Joseph Gollomb . . . *New York: The Macmillan Company . . . $2.*

Mr. Gollomb possesses the valuable faculty of interesting the vast majority as he goes along — it's partly his pretty taste in unusual methods of murder and his gift for slinging about the terminology of popular science in such a way as to fascinate us men in the street, whether the subject be claustrophobia, hypodermic needles, gelatine capsules containing God knows what, or a pituitary gland transplantation. Enter Galt, the Goldfish, who won many friends in "The Portrait Invisible," with his callipers and his giant intellect just in time to ferret out the lowdown about the murder of Colonel William Granger, millionaire and philanthropist; though this department, personally, saw the colonel commit suicide — or thought it

The Jubilee Coronation Number
of The Sun.
No. 14,289. LONDON, TUESDAY, JULY 10, 1838. 12th Edition of THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1838. PRICE
God Save
SKETCH OF HER M.

Coronation of Queen Victoria — Front Page. *London Sun* 1838

The paper has six columns to the page instead of the modern eight. Notice the small one-column head, "The Coronation," the conventional medallion illustration, and the "run over" from column one to the top of column six. The right hand column on page one is now the most important headline position in the paper.

did. At a late hour Galt and Gail, the victim's daughter, were in the hands of a madman, after shooting in the underworld, a kidnaping, several sessions of psycho-analysis, and some mighty clever deductions. Add the Goldfish to your list of erudite sleuths — he even speaks Japanese.

NOT ALL THE TRUTH.
By Lewis Melville . . . *Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company . . . $5.*

As actor, journalist, and clubman, Mr. Melville seems to have been steeped in fragments of after-dinner speeches and saturated in anecdote. At the least provocation they ooze from him just as they must have oozed originally out of green-rooms and banquet halls. Some are fairly untouched by time, but a good percentage have been frayed by years of handling, both in London and New York. The promise of "candid and witty reminiscences" with "intimate pictures" of Max Beerbohm, Israel Zangwill, and Edmund Gosse (writ on the jacket) is somewhat snowed under. Instead, there are numerous recollections of life in Soho before the war, and some frank disclosures of the unroseate side of the actor's life in days gone by.

THE SHOPPING BOOK.
By William H. Baldwin . . . *New York: The Macmillan Company . . . $2.50.*

How do you know, if you are an average housewife, whether the rug you are buying will wear two years or twenty, whether or not the porch furniture offered at bargain prices will dissolve in the first rainstorm, whether the new shower curtain will prove effective

after one month's use? There are ways of determining quality in advance of purchase, other than depending on a salesman's word or paying the top price, and Mr. Baldwin tells how to get your money's worth whether you are shopping for padlocks or perfume, mattresses or mail-boxes, kitchen cabinets or knitted underwear.

Many readers will be surprised to learn that watches as well as synthetic gin are sometimes sold under fake labels and packed in bogus boxes, that sterling silver is not necessarily solid, that a "silk" dress may contain more tin than silk. Along with other similar disclosures about common misrepresentations, Mr. Baldwin warns the consumer of the dangers lurking in cheap furniture stores, known in the trade as "borax houses" because they "soft-soap" their customers.

The woman who reads this book will learn to look bargain counter offerings over and under; she will learn to buy economically.

Among the most successful special departments are those to which readers themselves contribute, under the guidance, supervision, and selective judgment of the editor in charge. Such departments are of several different kinds, but all are based on the sound psychological principle that the reader's interest in his paper is greatly enhanced if he himself is allowed to participate in some of its activities and may have his vanity gratified by seeing his name and his offering in print.

One of the oldest and most firmly established of these departments contains letters to the editor on subjects of general interest. It seems to be a deep-rooted impulse of human nature to "write a letter to the paper about it." The guiding control of the special editor in charge determines the

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The Assassination of President Lincoln: Front Page, *New York Herald*, April 15, 1865

Six columns to the page was still in vogue at this period. Notice the top head, "Important," with the news of the assassination itself in a subordinate bank, and the one-column announcement, "Extra," in column four; also the "run over" at the top of column six.

character and quality of this department, and its value as a clearing house of reader-ideas. The most famous and presumably busiest men in England have not been above writing letters to the London *Times* to air a grievance, suggest public action, or take part in an argument.

A rigid space limit must be set on letters for publication. Most amateur writers have no idea of writing to space. The editor must also see to it that the topics discussed are those of general interest. He will exclude all attacks on individuals, both as a matter of good taste and because the paper itself is held responsible for any libelous material appearing in its columns, even when contributed by outsiders. He will also exclude violent attacks on organizations, institutions, or causes, though a reasoned criticism of any of these is quite permissible. He will be glad of letters which provoke lively discussion, but will use his discretion in bringing the argument to an end when it has gone on for a considerable time. He will give a hearing to both sides in any controversial question, even when letters directly assail the editorial policy of the newspaper. In fact, the department gives an excellent opportunity for the paper to create an impression of fairness and tolerance.

The editor must see to it that the letter department has variety, both in style and in subject matter. In order to appeal to a wide circle of readers, it must not be devoted exclusively to " heavy " topics, nor must it give all its space to light and trivial or humorous contributions. The most successful department encourages contributions from many different persons with a great variety of interests and points of view. It strikes a balance in tone, so that it will not appear to be either a dumping ground for pet grievances or a boosters' convention. One of the most constant problems of the editor is to keep the department from narrowing into a field for a clique of frequent contributors. Its usefulness,

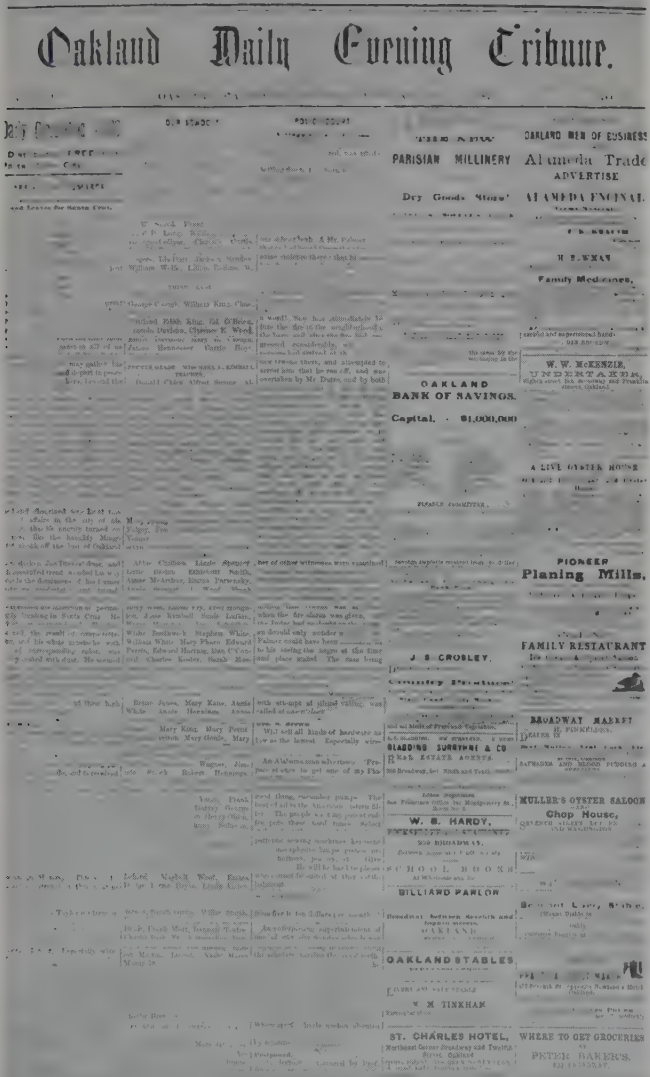
and also its interest, depend on its being kept open to all, within definitely announced limitations as to space and the requirements of good taste.

The "Open Forum," "Voice of the People," or whatever it may be called, really amounts to a collection of editorials from outside sources. When well edited, it becomes one of the most interesting parts of the paper, appealing as a worthy medium for the expression of ideas to writers whose contributions are of real value to the public at large.

Many newspapers include a special children's section, containing syndicated fiction and juvenile features and also stories and drawings by child readers, with special contests and prizes. This department is usually in charge of a woman with a gift for encouraging youthful contributors through letters and jingles, and for stimulating interest in a variety of competitions. From the newspaper's point of view, the department exists to increase circulation by making the paper seem indispensable to the children in the family. But it also serves as an opportunity for young writers and artists to try their wings and compare their achievements.

Much scorn has been heaped on the old fashioned "Advice to the Lovelorn" column with its sentimental "heart throbs." The notion still lingers in many quarters that such departments are habitually managed by crusty male bachelors with their tongues in their cheeks and an abysmal contempt for the treacle poured from their typewriters. Not even in its headlines and its editorials does the modern newspaper differ more strikingly from its old-time predecessor than in the character of this department.

Naturally, examples differ according to the ability of the person in charge and the class of readers to whom the newspaper in general appeals. But the most successful columns of this type today are conducted by women of wide sym-


Oakland Daily Evening Tribune.

OUR STAGE

POLICE COURT

THESE NEW

PARISIAN MILLINERY

Dry Goods Store

OAKLAND MEN OF BUSINESS

Alameda Trade

ADVERTISE

ALAMEDA ENQUIRER

W. E. WEAN

Family Medicines.

OAKLAND

BANK OF SAVINGS.

Capital, - $1,000,000

W. W. MCKENZIE,

UNDERTAKER,

A LIVE OYSTER HOUSE

PIONEER

Planing Mills.

J. S. CROSLEY.

County Purchaser

FAMILY RESTAURANT

BROADWAY MARKET

DAILY & WEEKLY TRIBUNE

BIADING SUBITNI & CO

REAL ESTATE AGENTS.

W. S. HARDY,

BILLIARD PARLOR

MULLER'S OYSTER SALOON

Chop House,

OAKLAND STABLES

W. M. TINKHAM

ST. CHARLES HOTEL,

WHERE TO GET GROCERIES

PETER BAKER'S.

Front Page Make-up, 1874: *The Oakland Tribune*

Editorials, police court news and advertisements are all given space on page one. Notice the treatment of the short "freak" without headline near the bottom of column three. There are five columns to the page, and the page size approximates that of a modern "tabloid."

pathies, tolerance, understanding of human nature, and common sense. Some of the problems presented by readers are silly, when judged by the standards of persons with the advantages of social training, education, and high intelligence; but that does not mean that they are not serious to the persons involved and even to society in so far as they reflect current customs and difficulties of adjustment. The column serves as a disinterested tribunal before which not only emotional problems but all phases of human relationship, economic and social questions, and occupational difficulties can be placed. In addition to giving her own advice, which requires very considerable knowledge and discretion, the editor of the column receives comments from other readers on the questions raised.

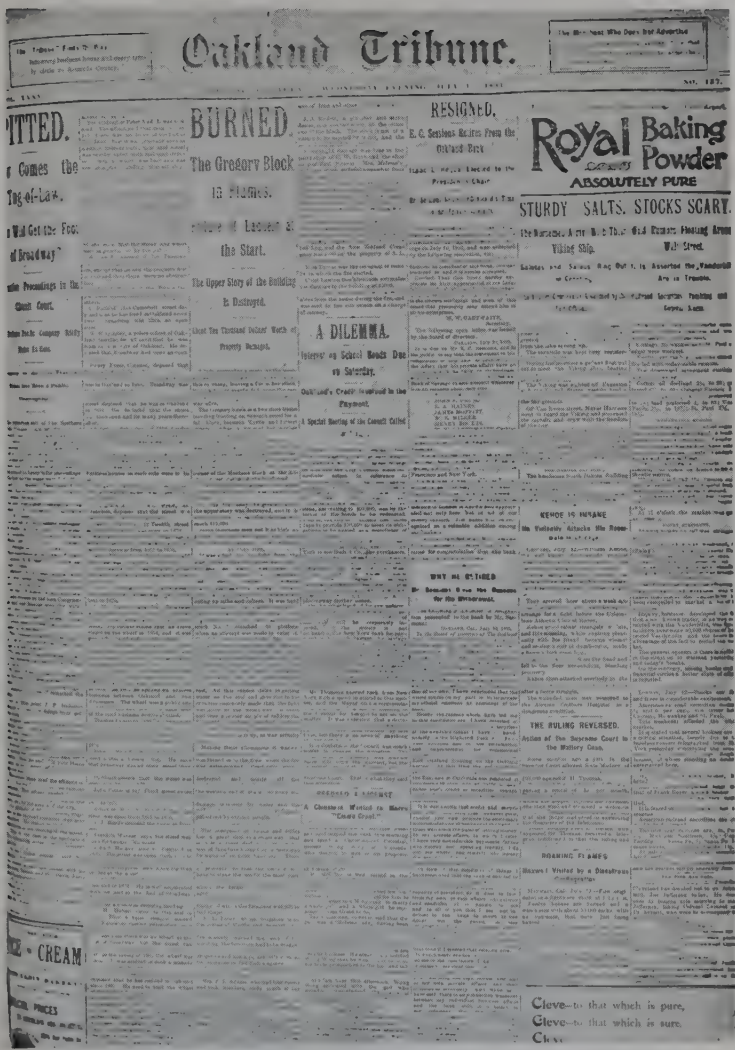
Besides a keen interest in other human beings, the editor of an advice column should have a sound understanding of abnormal psychology, child training, sociology, and economics and should be as nearly as possible free from prejudice or fanaticism of any sort. After all, human relations, emotions, and perplexities are not trivial and foolish concerns. In the best modern examples the old sentimentality has given place to a sincere and intelligent consideration of personal problems presented by readers who turn to the newspaper because they do not know where else to apply for aid and advice.

Only on the largest metropolitan papers does the columnist, the book reviewer, the art critic, the music critic, or any other head of a special department have a whole job to himself. The bright young reporter with a flair for light verse, quip, epigram, and pungent paragraph may have a great deal of fun and even lay the basis for a wider reputation by running a column of such brevities, to which readers also contribute. The column of this nature takes its tone from the personality of its producer. It is more or less

humorous, whimsical, and always good humored, though often gently satirical. Even though the beginner may have to cover a beat, write book reviews and editorials, or conduct the "Letter Box" in addition to writing his column, he has the shining figures of Don Marquis, Heywood Broun, Christopher Morley, Franklin P. Adams, and other essayists, wits, and poets who first won fame through their newspaper columns to beckon him on.

A successful column of this nature is many-faceted. It may contain thumbnail essays, specimens of unconscious humor offered by the headlines, compositors, and writers in the press, brief and clever comment on the affairs and follies of mankind and on the news of the day. The columnist is the court jester of the newspaper world. A lively sense of humor, a freedom from too great bitterness and cynicism even when pricking bubbles, and a clever, quick turn of phrase are essential. "The Conning Tower" of the New York *World*, "A Line o' Type or Two" in the Chicago *Tribune*, "Hit or Miss" in the Chicago *Daily News*, "The Sun Dial" in the New York *Sun*, "The Lantern" in the New York *Herald-Tribune*, and "Ted Cook's Cook-Coos" in the Hearst papers are examples of well-known columns of this type.

The first of the following examples is a day's issue of "Hit or Miss." Following it is a college column, "The Periscope," from the University of California *Daily Californian*.


Oakland Tribune.

BURNED.

The Gregory Block

13 Homes.

A DILEMMA.

RESIGNED.

Royal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

STURDY SALTS. STOCKS SCARY.

Cleve–to that which is pure,
Cleve–to that which is sure.
Clev

Front Page Make-up, 1893: *The Oakland Tribune*

Notice approach to modern headline style, but advertisements on page one and the "run over" to the top of the page are still in vogue. The lead story is now given column-one position. Notice the length of the story. The page is now seven columns wide.

HIT OR MISS

OVEREMPHASIS.

(A senior speaks.)

Time was at Gargoyle college when we were truly
football mad;
The fever gripped each student and his uncle and
his dad.
We went crazy at pep meetings, and the enemy
we'd hiss.
But alas, the game is suffering from overemphasis.

We would crowd the grand stands weekly and our
pennants wildly wave,
And each player was a hero, ay, the bravest of
the brave.
We talked of passes, end runs and such intricacies
deep
Over soup, between our classes, in our spare time
and our sleep.

But such green enthusiasm you won't find here any
more;
Modern youth is finding football — well, a rather
beastly bore.
Outside fans now crowd our grand stands with their
blankets and their flasks,
And a surcease from weird whoopee is what every
student asks.

We are quite fed up at Gargoyle. Sport's been
overemphasized.
Culture's triumphs are what lure us; scholarship is
highly prized.
Yes, we're going strong for culture — you can scarcely
blame us, when
We've had such a r-o-t-t-e-n season, losing eight
games out of ten!

—

"Insists Plane Pilot Wear an Opera Hat." — Headline.

The ultimate in high hat.

—

The dog show was ushered in this week with the help of canine beauty specialists. There are some who still cling to the illusion that a pedigreed animal is only a pedigreed ânimal, while a homely mutt is a pal.

—

Duerkheim, Germany, we learn from the reliable A. P., wasn't able to stage a dog show this fall. Duerkheim had to be satisfied with sausage fair.

—

CYNIC!

In several drug-store windows I have seen displays of a "lifetime can opener." Don't you imagine there's many a sardine-sated husband who has found out that a can opener is exactly what he has married?

AYDHU INZUREM.

—

THEY HAVE ALL KINDS AT THE BUREAU.

"Holy temperatures since 3 p.m." — From a weather news report.

I've heard of unholy temptations, but holy temperatures I am wholly unable to comprehend.

C. J.

—

QUATRAIN.

Should folly and desire lie slain in me,
Would I regard their tomb complacently?
I'd be unhappier than now, 'twould seem,
Longing for the glint of one bright dream.

FAN C. SMITH.

—

"HITCHY."

Raymond Hitchcock! "Hit or Miss" contributors remember well his genial witticisms at our 1928

The New York Times.
GIANT PLANE IN WILD FLIGHT SETS TWO HOMES AFIRE AS IT CRASHES AND BURNS
FOX AND WARNERS
2 BILLION UTILITIES PROGRAM WILL SPEED WORK IN 1930, EXECUTIVES TELL HOOVER
PETIX TRIAL IS LAST; GOVERNOR SUMMING P. RUTHSTEIN MURDER COMA PARLEY DEC. 17
P.R.R. TO ISSUE STOCK
New York Woman and Father Hold in Theft Of Jewels on Leviathan Docks at Cherbourg
Reproduced by permission of the New York Times

Modern Front Page Make-up: *The New York Times*

Notice the "balance" in headline styles across the page; the leading position, indicated by the size of heads, at the top of columns 1–2 and 7–8; the absence of advertisements, and of "run overs."

banquet, while he was appearing at the Apollo in "Just Fancy." Whether in musical comedies, such as "The Beauty Shop" and "Hitchy Koo," or in plays like "The Sap," "Service for Husbands" and "Your Uncle Dudley," he was an artist to his finger tips. He virtually died with his boots on; playing in the latter piece to the point of exhaustion. "Hit or Miss" contributors feel a genuine personal loss in the passing of "Hitchy."

CAMPUS CHARLIE.

WHY, EVEN GUS HAS GONE TEMPERAMENTAL. HE WANTS A GHOST JANITOR.

Regarding those "ghost writer" comments of yours: I wonder if you were thinking a ghost col. con. would lessen your labor? Or possibly you had in mind ghost contribs.

BEATRICE M.

HISTORICAL BROWSING.

The dull gray Chicago Historical society building on a dull gray afternoon. . . . Links from the chain that once barred the Hudson river to British gate crashers. . . . The bell that pealed alarms at Camp Douglas during the civil war. . . Heart-touching relics of Fort Dearborn days and signs, "Don't touch!" . . . Kids who touch despite admonitory slaps. . . . "Gee, look at the old hand-pump fire injun!" . . . They've widened the aisles between counters so that two stylish stouts can meet and pass without grazing. . . . Folks who've just read "Chicago, the History of Its Reputation" reveling in woodcuts of the courthouse before the fire, the I. C. station when smokestacks were bigger and peskier, Mrs. O'Leary's cow and the Saloon building. . . . A realtor's sign after the fire: "All gone save wife, children and energy." (What a slogan to use after a Wall street crash!) . . . Von Steuben's letters to Washington on how to take redcoats for a ride. . . . Lincoln's slippers, Col. Ellsworth's sword, the Appomattox table, a China doll from the great fire, a ticket to Crosby's opera house. . . . A stranger

from the east wonders why they don't show Al Capone's diamond shirt studs. . . . A collection of pre-prohibition gats. . . . Frilled flounces of flappers in the fabulous forties. . . . A North Western time-table in the days when Evanston was distant in more ways than in spirit. . . . Ancient fans, yellow dance programs, withered finery. . . . Two high-school youths in the civil war room arguing as to whether a motorcycle engine could be installed in a one-man airplane. . . . A bell rings — "Everybody out, please." . . . Night's curtain falls on Chicago's glorious past.

FLIGHT.

Through calm and uneventful days
I smother smoldering desires;
But I am powerless to quell
A tumult of untrammeled fires

Deep in my breast; myself I chain
Beyond the chance of wandering,
But oh, incorrigibly free,
The soul of me is on the wing!

ADELAIDE P. LOVE.

—

"Trace Hoover Stock to Swiss." — Headline.

We can bank on Hoover stock to remain high — as far above par as the Swiss are above sea level.

—

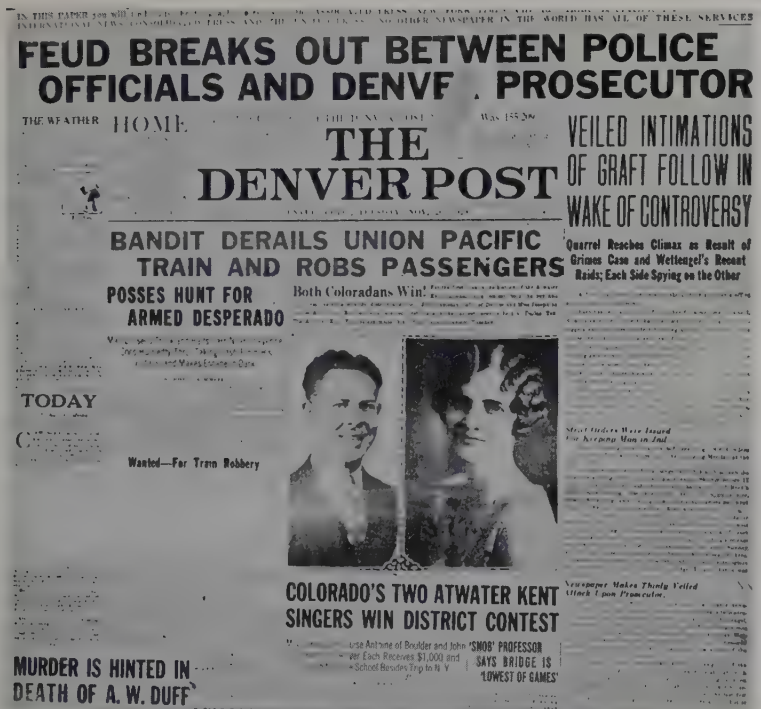
"Greatest User of Air Is U. S. Government." — Radio headline.

Needless to add, U. S. senate tariff debates have helped make the air consumption record what it is today.

—

Still, it may be the opinion of "wild jackass" politicians that only the bray deserves the air.

GENE MORGAN.


FEUD BREAKS OUT BETWEEN POLICE OFFICIALS AND DENVF . PROSECUTOR
THE WEATHER HOME
THE DENVER POST
VEILED INTIMATIONS OF GRAFT FOLLOW IN WAKE OF CONTROVERSY
Quarrel Reaches Climax as Result of Grimes Case and Wettengel's Recent Raids; Each Side Spying on the Other
BANDIT DERAILS UNION PACIFIC TRAIN AND ROBS PASSENGERS
POSSES HUNT FOR ARMED DESPERADO
Both Coloradans Win!
TODAY
Wanted—For Train Robbery
COLORADO'S TWO ATWATER KENT SINGERS WIN DISTRICT CONTEST
'SNOB' PROFESSOR SAYS BRIDGE IS 'LOWEST OF GAMES'
MURDER IS HINTED IN DEATH OF A. W. DUFF

Modern Front Page Make-up: *The Denver Post*

Compare the upper half of page one of the Denver *Post* with the front page of the New York *Times*. The *Times* is ultra-conservative, the *Post* is "sensational." Notice the use of "banner lines" in the *Post;* the use of illustrations on page one; the abandoning of the principle of balance in the arrangement of heads. The *Post* also uses red ink for its main banner line. A large number of papers use an intermediate style of make-up. The use of banner lines, especially in street editions, and of illustrations on page one, is fairly general.

Oliver Umphrey Oomph and his little chum are almost ready to graduate from Harmon Gym. They're glad and we don't blame them. Anybody would be glad to graduate from Harmon. In fact, they're so happy that they can be heard singing the following ditty twice a week:

DEFENSING

(With apologies to Wellington Blott)

Say, folks, you ought
to see us fence —
Our knowledge of the
sport's immense.

It's swell the way
we use our foil —
We pay no heed
to Mr. Hoyle.

We scrap like knights
were wont to do;
What care we for
a wound or two?

You'd like the way
we thrust and lunge —
We sop the blood
up with a sponge!

We've got the edge
on War God Mars;
Our chest is cluttered
up with scars.

Poo-poo-padoo!
and also Gracious!
We surely like
to get pugnacious.

* * *

TOUGH!

The melancholy days
are here.
We're full of
academic fear.

Professors clap their
hands and grin
To think of what
a fix we're in.

And up and down
our little spinals
Trickle pangs of
looming finals.

There's no use
moaning, though — because
We know there ain't
no Santy Claus.

* * *

PERSONAL

And now, Mr. Timmerman; let us say good night: Good Night!!!

Mr. and Mrs. Inchcape Rutt,
Mr. and Mrs. Barnacle Bill.

* * *

FILLERS

(By Mason Jarr)

Miss Melba Macaroon will sing "Keep Your Arms Where They Belong," by Strangler Lewis.

* * *

And then, as Flavious Frump said yesterday afternoon, it's a great life, if you don't weekend.

* * *

Deer Barnacle:

Writing from Saint Loose, just to let you in on something Gnu. Visited the famous zoo here, but am now in the equally famous hospital. Reason: I Lambda Nu.

Peg Leg.

EXERCISES

1. What would be the advantage of a " letter box " department in your student paper?

2. Write half a dozen letters on appropriate topics for this department, remembering that their purpose is to stimulate others to take up the discussion.

3. Write a series of short book reviews for your student paper; choose current books which are likely to interest your fellow students; do not make them academic in tone; keep them short.

4. Let those members of the class who have any musical training cover a school or college concert; others may cover an amateur dramatic production. Bring in the reviews for criticism by the class.

5. Do you think it would be a good thing to have a regular book, music, and drama critic on the student paper? What are the possibilities and difficulties in the way of a department of moving picture criticism?

6. What would be the advantages and difficulties of including a " personal advice " column on special student problems in the student paper?

7. Let those students who have a knack for it compile a sample humorous column suitable for a student publication. (" Columnists," even more than poets, are born, not made. Therefore this exercise should be optional. Nothing is more deadly than to be told at the point of a gun: " Go to, now, be funny! ")

XVI

THE COPY DESK

After the reporter's story has been passed by the city editor, it is handed over to "copy readers" for final revision. Most copy readers are men or women of long experience as reporters or editors. Although a position on the copy desk is seldom given to a novice, its functions are considered here, both because they are closely connected with the work of the reporter and because, on smaller papers, the work of the two departments is less sharply divided.

The copy reader makes final corrections in the spelling, punctuation, and grammar of the copy handed to him. It is the reporter's business to present "clean copy" in the first place, but the newspaper does not place absolute reliance on his perfection in these respects. Each paper has its own preferences as to capitalization, forms to be used in titles of address, the spelling of words having allowable variants, and similar points of typographical style. These also should be noted by the reporter, but a final checking is considered necessary. The copy desk is also familiar with special points of newspaper policy and corrects any infringements of these special rules which may have escaped the eye of the city editor. For example, the owner of the paper may have a "black list" of names which are not to be mentioned, he may order that his own name is not to be mentioned, or that it should always be given a certain style of address.

On most city papers the reporter does not write the heads

for his own stories. The writing of headlines is usually the task of the copy readers after the city editor has indicated the size and form of head desired. Headline writing has its own special and exacting technic. The head must make sense in itself; it must accurately summarize the main point of the story; it must arouse interest; and it must do all this in a fixed number of letters and spaces. By writing a clear, striking, and comprehensive lead the reporter can greatly facilitate the complicated task of the headline writer; for if the lead gives the most important factors of the story, as it should, it provides the headline writer at once with the substance of his head.

Heads vary in size and form according to the play given the story; but, whatever their length, they have a dual function. First, they serve as a table of contents, by which the reader may decide whether the story is one which he wishes to read in full. One very often hears the expression: "I read only the headlines." By their means the reader is given a cursory idea of the main events of the news if he lacks time or inclination to read further. But the headlines also serve a second purpose: they must advertise the story as well as indicate its contents. A good head not only summarizes the news but so piques the reader's curiosity that he will be led to read the entire story.

A dull head can go far to kill a good story by failing to attract the reader's attention and interest. On the other hand, a head which advertises goods that are not forthcoming in the story weakens the reader's confidence in the paper and makes him feel that he has been cheated. A facetious head on a tragic story, or vice versa, not only destroys the consistency and unity of the effect but throws the reader at the very start into an inappropriate mood. Since the headline writer often has not time to read beyond the lead, the reporter shares the blame if he has established the wrong

emotional tone in the beginning and the headline consequently clashes with the prevailing tone of the story.

It is also possible for a very carefully prepared story to be falsified in the head. Those unfamiliar with the newspaper division of labor may unjustly blame the reporter for the misconstruction; but in any case the newspaper is held strictly responsible not only for the accuracy of its stories but also for the accuracy of the headlines it publishes. Libel suits have been won on the basis of words appearing in the headlines, even though the story beneath the head contained no libelous material.

Much of the adverse criticism directed at newspaper English lies at the door of the headline. Words like *meet* for *convention, pact* for *agreement, probe* for *investigation,* and *defi* for *defiance* are barbarisms which frequently appear. But if the critic himself were obliged to give the gist of a story in a clear and arresting form, in a limited time, and with a count of twelve or twenty-four letters and spaces to the line, he might extend the cloak of charity to the harassed headline writer.

Besides meeting the requirements growing out of their relation to the story, the headlines must also be so chosen and arranged on the page as to make a pleasing pattern to the eye. Types and styles of headlines vary with the individual paper and can be learned only by personal experience. There are a few general principles, such as that two freak heads are not ordinarily placed side by side and that the largest heads appear at the top of the column, but these are corollaries of the primary design: to make the page as a whole appeal to the eye by a variety which must at the same time avoid a patchwork effect.

If the head applies to the story indicated by a " banner line " across the entire top of the page, it must still make complete sense in itself and not depend on the banner line

for elucidation of its meaning. Under the banner line announcing the end of a sensational trial, the following head obviously violated this rule:

PROBATION TO BE ASKED BY HER LAWYERS

From this head as its stands the reader is given no idea who "she" is or what occasion she has to ask for probation. In the next edition of the paper in which it appeared the head was changed to a form which, using the same space and the same type, does tell the reader, without reference to the banner line, what has happened and to whom:

MILLIONAIRE'S WIFE FACES 1 TO 10 YEARS

There are a number of technical rules governing the writing of headlines. Some of these are of general application and are based on sound reader-psychology; others are limited to certain papers, and some are more or less in the nature of traditional taboos. Some of the laws which, for sound reasons, are most widely enforced are as follows:

The emotional tone of the head should correspond to that of the story. A serious and momentous story is not given a freak head, for example.

The head should make a positive, not a negative statement.

It should make a declaration, not ask a question.

The head must emphasize the main point of the story, not its subordinate elements. Subordinate, but still important, aspects are placed in the " bank " below the main head.

Each head and bank must make complete sense.

Every head should contain a verb, expressed or implied. This verb should be in the active voice and the present tense, if possible.

These are not merely mechanical rules, but have been developed out of experience. The files of old newspapers show many negative and interrogative heads, and heads resembling book titles without verbs. But experience has demonstrated that the head which implies action holds the reader's attention better than one which merely announces a topic. Moreover, the reader wants to know what is happening, not what did not happen. He does not care to be left in the air by a head which asks him a question instead of giving him information. And he wants least of all to be left in confusion of mind as to what the head is trying to say.

The two following heads to the same story illustrate the importance of clearness and correct emphasis. The first reads:

Friends See Man Strike Wife, Fatal Shooting

Victim Goes Set After Mate Raises One Bid to Four.

The second head runs:

> ***Wife Kills Husband in Bridge Game Argument***
>
> Man Strikes Her During Row So She Shoots Him.

The first example belongs in the " what is wrong with this picture " class. The main point of the story is what happened, not the fact that friends saw it happen, nor that the shooting was preceded by another event, the man striking his wife. Moreover, this head leaves the reader entirely in the dark as to which person did the shooting and who was the victim. If he makes anything at all out of it, his conclusion will probably be that it was the husband who shot his wife after striking her. This headline writer also allowed his interest in bridge to run away with his interest in the murder. Of course, the point of the story is that the murder was the result of a card game; but it is hardly the crux of the tale that the victim's bid was raised from one to four and that he was set. In fact, the bank of this head, appearing out of the blue with no previous reference to cards, is utterly unintelligible to all readers who do not play bridge and is bewildering even to those who do play.

The second head, of the same length and type, conveys clearly and immediately the information that it was the wife who killed her husband and that the cause was an argument

over bridge. The preliminary quarrel in which the husband struck his wife is properly relegated to a subordinate position, in the bank.

The rule that each line of the head should contain a complete phrase or division of the idea, and therefore should not end with part of a hyphenated word or with a preposition, is based on this requirement of immediate intelligibility. The eye pauses at the end of the line, and the mind pauses with it. But this and other minor laws must be broken on occasion. If every head, with its rigid limitations as to space, had to be perfect, the paper would never be "put to bed" on time. In particular, the rule that the same word must not be used twice in a head has recently been made the subject of much criticism and discussion. Often a synonym of equal length is not only hard to find but is awkward and far-fetched. There is also something to be said for the actual gain in force through the repetition of an important word.

A striking difference between the modern newspaper and its old-time predecessor is the elimination of such "filler words" as *a, and,* and *the* from the headlines. *Is* and *are* are also avoided wherever possible, since the meaning can usually be made clear without them. The headline must compress the greatest possible amount of information into the fewest possible words, and this effect of compression is enhanced by the omission of all words not absolutely necessary to the sense. Such rules as that a head must not start with a verb and that no line should end with a two-letter word have a less obvious reason for existence, but they are a recognized part of the technic of head writing on certain papers.

The bank is placed just below the main head when the latter is large enough to carry it. Some heads are followed

by a series of banks, while smaller heads stand alone without a bank. The entire head, consisting of the main line or lines with the bank or banks below, forms a unit whose parts are related and yet distinct, and are placed in the order of their importance. Whenever it is used the bank must convey a complete separate idea, but the connection of this idea with the facts given in the main head must be close and direct.

When a story is continued from one page to another, a "jump head" is used above the second part of the story. The jump head is a brief rephrasing of the original head of the story. Some papers use a jump head of a single word indicating the subject matter, while others employ what amounts to an entire separate headline. But a new head of one sort or the other is always required, so that the reader, turning from one page to another, may readily find the continuation of the story he is reading.

In stories of three hundred or more words subheads are interspersed in order to break the monotony of long lines of type. A single subhead is never used, but always two or more. Subheads are inserted after each 150 words, or approximately after each two paragraphs of ordinary length. Their position is governed by consideration for the eye rather than for the mind; consequently they are placed at fairly even intervals, without much attempt to follow the logical division of ideas in the text.

Although the reporter may not be required to write the headlines on the news stories written by himself or other members of the staff, a knowledge of the general principles of headline writing is useful to him and makes it easier for him to pick up its special details if need arises. The book reviewer or dramatic editor sometimes writes the heads and superintends the make-up of his own section; and the artistic

appearance of his page, as well as its ability to attract interest, will be vastly improved if he conforms to the style which experience has found most successful in the news head.

The writing of captions for pictures is in many respects similar to the writing of heads, and in most instances the reporter is called upon to caption the pictures used to illustrate his story. The letters and spaces at his disposal for the over-line of his caption are governed by the size of type used and the number of columns taken by the width of the cut. Like the headline, the caption at once indicates the nature of the story and attracts attention to it. The main caption, across the top of the picture, is usually supplemented by a few lines of type below it, giving the names of those depicted, indicating their relative positions in the picture, and summarizing the gist of the story which the cut illustrates.

The following "Instructions to Copy Readers," quoted from the style book of the San Francisco *Chronicle*, indicate the set of rules in vogue on one particular newspaper:

"Never start a head with a verb.

"Never write negative heads. Each head should be positive, should say something definite, and should contain a verb or have one implied.

"Copy readers will be held responsible for the 'fit' of the heads. All heads larger than the single column should be most carefully checked. Count your letters and spaces.

"Extreme care should be exercised in the spelling and writing of proper names. Be certain that your copy is consistent in this regard.

"Do not let a story get soggy with long paragraphs.

"Put in subheads. Any story 300 words long or over should be subheaded. Never use less than two subheads and put them 150 words apart.

" Be careful about jump heads. Do not forget them.

" When paper is clipped for corrections mark page, column, and edition for information of composing room, thus: ' P-3, col. 5, in 2d street.'

" Do not use the names of unimportant persons in heads.

" Do not ask a question in a head.

" Heads run with streamer lines are not to be written as a ' run down,' but as an independent unit. They must tell their own story without depending on or repeating the streamer.

" Do not use prepositions or articles.

" *Is* and *are* are permitted at times, but frowned upon.

" All heads must be in present tense.

" *Looms* is barred. So are *probe* and *Mr.* except in quoted matter."

The style and type used for headlines, and their arrangement on the page, do more than anything else to give the paper a distinctive appearance. The reader recognizes a paper with which he is familiar, as he recognizes a well-known face, even before he catches sight of its name.

The editor, when he sends a story to the copy desk, marks it with a letter or number which indicates the exact style of the head to be used. The following pages show typical heads, with their identifying numbers, used on two different papers, the New York *Times* and the San Francisco *Chronicle*. The numbers on the *Chronicle* schedule (314½, 20–021½, and the like) indicate the style of type illustrated. The word *count* refers to the count of letters and spaces. In this count the letters *M* and *W*, both upper and lower case, count one and a half; the letter *I* and the comma and apostrophe count one-half.

A HEAD

BRITAIN GOES OVER TO FRENCH POSITION ON LAND ARMAMENT

Dropping Fight on Conscripts Is Considered Return for Paris's Shift in Naval Accord.

BUT BRITISH DENY BARGAIN

Officials Say They Arrived at New Stand Independently—Berlin Sole Opponent.

KELLOGG WORKS AT NOTE

He Calls In Navy Chiefs and Also Confers With Coolidge on Reply to Britain and France on Accord.

¼ *C* HEAD

FINANCIAL MARKETS

Irregular Movement of Stocks, but Numerous Advances—Call Money 7½, Sterling Lower.

HEADLINE STYLES — NEW YORK *TIMES*

B HEAD

GIANTS' FOUR HOMERS BEAT THE REDS, 7 TO 4

McGrawmen, However, Still Trail Cardinals, Who Trounce Robins, by One Game.

JACKSON'S DRIVE DECIDES

Hits for Circuit With Two On in 8th and Breaks 4-4 Tie —Victors Outhit.

BENTON WINS 25TH GAME

O'Doul and Ott Make Successive Home Runs in First—O'Doul Hits Another in Third.

D HEAD

LAUDS DENVER SPEECH.

Representative Collins Says Muscle Shoals Reference Pleases Smith.

F HEAD

OCEAN TRAVEL.

F-1 HEAD

Obituary Notes.

HEADLINE STYLES — NEW YORK *TIMES*

M HEAD

BUDAPEST POLICE FIND NEW CAROLIST 'PLOT'

Citizens Receive Copies of Manifestoes in Mail—Headquarters Fails to Locate Sender.

N HEAD

COMMODITY PRICES.

Copper Goes to New High at 15¼ Cents—Cotton and Grains Up.

L-1 HEAD

CHURCH GROUP BACKS HOOVER

Ohio Methodist Conference at Same Time Declares Against Smith.

N. Y. U. and Georgia Will Meet On Gridiron Here Next Year

New York University's football team will meet the University of Georgia next Fall, it was announced yesterday. Arrangements for the game were completed as the result of an exchange of communications between Chancellor Snelling of the Southern university and Chancellor Brown of New York University. No date has been set for the game which will be played in New York.

P HEAD

RAILROAD EARNINGS

Periodical Reports of Rail Companies With Comparisons With Last Year.

Z HEAD

Yankees' Hopes Lie in Their Bats; Pitching Main Reliance of Cards

Hugmen, Individually, Have Outhit Series Rivals During Season, But Injuries May Hamper New Yorkers—Hoyt Only Dependable Pitcher of Yanks, While St. Louis Has Four Stars.

HEADLINE STYLES — NEW YORK *TIMES*

No. 5

20-021½—Two lines. Count 24 to each line.
Bank, 314½—Two lines. Count 46-37.

City Planning Neglected Often for Quick Turnover

This Speculative Feature in Home Building Is Being Overcome by Architect's Advisory Council

No. 7

20-021½—Three lines. Count is 23 to each line.
Bank, 314½--Three lines. Count is 46-37-30.

California Cities, Looking For New Federal Buildings, Doomed to Disappointment

Congressmen, Fearing "Pork Barrel" Cry, Will Let Government Pile Up Rent Bill; Shortridge Settles on Child Amendment

No. 13

Top line 20-021½—Count is 25
Second 20-023½—Count is 38
Third 20-021½—Count is 25

New Prison Director Picked

McLaughlin's Successor Being Guessed At

Scramble for Control Next

HEADLINE STYLES — SAN FRANCISCO *CHRONICLE*

No. 3
Top bank—12 to line.
Second—26—22—16.
Binder—19.
Third—26—22—16.

KLAN LEADER SEEKS TO EXPEL K. K. K. FOUNDER

Simmons and Clarke Ordered Banished for Opposition to Present Regime

DR. EVANS DENOUNCED

Imperial Wizard Is Declared Near End as Leader of the Order

No. 4
Top—16 to line.
Bank—23—18—13

Grammar School Association Will Banquet at Hotel

Washington Students of Classes of 1885 or Before Eligible

No. 12
One line—Count is 22
WATCHMAN REPORTS SUICIDE

No. 14
1 col. 510½ in box—2 lines.
Count is 21 to a line.

Policeman Refuses $2000 Reward for Finding Girl

No. 3½
Top—12 to line.
Bank—26—22—16.

REPORT ABOUT TRUCKS SPIKED

Pierce-Arrow Has No Intention of Discontinuing Their Manufacture

No. 4½
Top—16 to line.
Bank—2 lines—23—16.

Venizelos Forms Greek Cabinet

Ex-Premier Again to Guide Country

No. 9
2 lines—17—18 to a line.

U. S. Flyer's Body Is Washed Ashore

No. 930½
4 top lines. Count 15 to line.
Bank 314½—22-18-14-10.

Prince of Wales Guarded by Flock Of Camouflaged Police in Paris

French Taking No Chance of Anything Happening to Royal Visitor From England

HEADLINE STYLES — SAN FRANCISCO *CHRONICLE*

JUMP HEADS

5½ JUMP—1 Col.

3 lines **512½**—Count is 17 to line.

U. S. Barred to All Japanese as Result Of Immigration Bill

2 COL. JUMP

2 lines **20-05½**—Count is 26 to a line.

Grain Broker Ends Life After Running Down Man

CAPTION No. 7 (2 cols.)

One line, **20-021½**—Count is 22

Changed Her Mind

310½ (under)—Mark whether 1 or 2 cols.

Mrs. John Wesley Poe, named after the founder of her church, and friends, who corroborated her testimony in a suit for divorce from Oliver Perry Poe.

CAPTION No. 7 (3 cols.)

Set **20-021½**—Count is 32, with **310½** under (mark whether 2 or 3 cols.)

CAPTION No. 7 (4 cols. or more)

Set **20-06½**—Count is 11 to 1 col., with **310½** under (mark whether 1, 2, 3 or more cols.)

HEAD CAPTION No. 8 (under cuts)

Set **20-011½**—Two lines. Count is 30 each line.

Speeders Need Not Expect Mercy From Woman Justice

HEADLINE STYLES — SAN FRANCISCO *CHRONICLE*

510½ SUBHEAD

2 lines—Count is 20 to line.

Fight Among Leaders of Klan Just Begun, Clarke

12 SUBHEAD

THEY "SHOW OFF"

1 COL.

INSIDE

20-08½ in Box
Line counts 17

CAPTION No. 1

Bill's With Us

Under cut 310½ in box.

W. S. Hart, who will be seen in "Wild Bill Hickok" at the New Fillmore and New Mission Theaters today and tomorrow.

PAGE ONE

Two Lines 20-020½
Lines count 15 each

CAPTION No. 2

Actress Named In Divorce Case

Under cut 310½ in box.

Jacqueline Logan, screen beauty, who was mentioned as "the other woman" in the divorce hearing against George Melford, director.

FOR PAGE ONE—Caption No. 3

Two lines 20-021½—Lines count 24 each.

Heiress to Millions in Oil Secret Bride; N. Y. Aghast

Under cut 310½.

Miss Millicent Rogers, granddaughter of H. H. Rogers, whose wedding has set New York's 400 looking up ancestry of her husband, who calls himself Count Ludwig Salm von Hoogstraten.

HEADLINE STYLES — SAN FRANCISCO *CHRONICLE*

When the reader looks at his newspaper, before he has read a word of its contents, he receives a general visual impression. The page may appear attractive or stodgy; the heads may be so arranged that the eye easily grasps each as a unit, or they may be thrown on the page in a confusing jumble; a large number of unrelated type faces may produce a crazy quilt effect, or a well ordered arrangement of carefully chosen type styles may present a general harmony which the reader appreciates even though he may not analyze it.

Make-up is as important to the newspaper as the arrangement and display of his goods is to the merchant. A paper which looks hard to read will not be read, or at least will not attract new readers, just as the store whose goods are unattractively displayed may keep a few faithful customers but will not build up an increasing trade. This does not mean that there are hard and fast rules for make-up which must be rigidly followed. If that were true, all newspapers would look alike. On the contrary, nowhere more than in its make-up does the paper show an individuality of its own.

The single cardinal principle of make-up is balance, but this principle may be carried out in a variety of styles and with even greater variation in detail. From different points of view, the main styles of make-up may be classified in three ways: as horizontal or vertical; as light or dark; and as "broken" or "wrap around."

The great majority of papers follow a vertical style, which leads the eye to move up and down the page rather than across it. The chief exponent of horizontal make-up is the Denver *Post*. In horizontal make-up so many two, three, and four column heads are used, not only as top heads but farther down the page, that the eye follows a series of heavy lines of type across the

page instead of moving up and down each column in turn.

A " light " make-up is less arresting to the eye and more conservative in effect than one in which blacker fonts of type are used. Extreme examples of light make-up are the New York *Times* and the Kansas City *Star*. In general, western papers tend to be " blacker " than those of the East; morning papers are " lighter " than evening papers; and, if a paper runs many editions during the day, the use of heavy banner lines for street sale editions are often discontinued for the home edition, giving the latter a lighter appearance. At present, however, the use of extremely deep black heads, formerly characteristic of the far West, is being modified in favor of a somewhat more conservative style.

The difference between light and dark make-up extends even to the printing of display advertisements. On a light paper the background of advertising cuts will be uniformly light, and the use of white letters against an inked-in background, or of extremely black, broad type for the advertising text will be discountenanced in order to preserve the unity of pictorial effect throughout the paper.

The choice is purely one of individual taste, and the terms *conservative* and *sensational* are not used in any sense of praise or disapproval. There can be little doubt that a moderately black style, obtained by the use of larger and deeper heads, attracts the attention of the reader more directly than small, thin, unobtrusive type. The psychological effect is demonstrated by the change in form from street editions to those delivered to the homes of subscribers. In the one case, the passerby must be " hailed " and induced to stop; in the other, he expects to read the paper anyhow and his attention is in less need of being challenged. The extremes of sensational make-up, on the other hand, may de-

feat their own ends, just as individual noises cease to be distinguishable in a continuous din of sound.

The distinction between "broken" and "wrap around" make-up is based upon a psychological choice. In the "wrap around" style, a story is continued from the bottom of one column to the top of the next, or from the bottom, say, of column eight, page one, to the top of column one, page two. In defense of this style it is maintained that the paper is easier to read if the eye is allowed to follow its natural course without interruption. Just how far this psychological advantage should be allowed to interfere with balance and visual attractiveness is a matter for individual decision. Some papers regard page one as a "show window" in which as large a number of goods as possible should be displayed. For that reason many stories will be broken (that is, continued on another page) in order to give room for a large number of stories. Other papers break a story only at the bottom of a column, and still others endeavor to avoid all breaks by running each story complete in one position. The number of stories on page one may easily vary from as low as twelve to as high as forty.

An extreme use of the "wrap around" style may sacrifice the demands of balance and result in a forbidding stretch of small unbroken lines of type which discourages the reader before he begins. An extremely broken style may annoy the reader by sending him dodging about, chasing from page to page until he cries out in despair for continuity. The demands of the eye and of the mind are somewhat conflicting, and most papers, while leaning to one side or the other, adopt a compromise adjustment of values.

The technical requirements of balance are based upon experience of visual and mental habits. The natural focus of attention is above the center of the page. Therefore the

main heads are placed at the top, and cuts are usually kept above the center fold. In general, the attempt is made to avoid having the fold come across the face of the cut, although an occasional extremely deep cut may cross the center line. One has only to imagine the upside-down appearance that would result from a series of small heads across the top of the page, followed by deep heads with banks near the bottom, to realize how firmly based is the practice of grouping the larger visual masses at the top.

Balance, however, is not a matter of cut and dried symmetry but of diversity in harmony. If there is too much diversity (four or five different styles of head on a line across the top of the page) the result is a hodge podge of unrelated visual appeals. If there is too much uniformity the effect is rigid and formal as in a room where the chairs are lined up against the wall, each exactly equidistant from its neighbor.

To secure the requisite balance, main news heads of similar type and depth are offset by freak heads in boxes or in a different type face. Captions fulfill the same purpose as freak heads. If italics or a box is used for one of these interposed freaks the same style will be used for the other freak heads or captions, and the news heads will show a similar uniformity of general style although the same type may be used in different sizes. If a row of identical news heads were placed side by side clear across the page, the eye would be confused and would tend to skip the light column rule dividing them and attempt to read them straight across. Two similar freak heads are not placed side by side, nor, in general, is a freak head placed next to a caption. The purpose of the freak head and the cuts is ornament; one would not crowd two or three vases of flowers together on a table nor mass the ornaments of a costume in a bunch. Neither would one combine five or six different colors in an ensemble.

Exactly the same principles of touches of "relief" and of the avoidance of a clash of many different elements applies to the choice and the arrangement of type on the page.

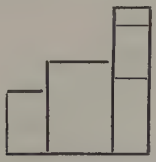
In order to avoid deserts of unbroken type farther down the page, the lower part is broken by smaller news heads, freaks, and boxes. If a story is carried from one column to another or from one page to another, care is taken that the break should not be made at the end of a sentence or the end of a paragraph, lest the reader imagine that he has reached the end of the story. If necessary, the story is "leaded out" (that is, the distance between the lines is increased by narrow strips of metal) so that the break will occur in the middle of a sentence. The appearance is also greatly improved if the first runover line is not the last line of a paragraph.

While the main news heads are usually placed in columns one and eight (or one and two, seven and eight, if the heads are of two column width) there is a recent tendency to use the first column of page one for an editorial feature. In that case balance in the make-up of the page is sought exactly as if it were of seven instead of eight columns wide, disregarding the first column entirely.

The placing of cuts is quite as important as the placing of heads, for pictures attract the eye even more than type. If the page contains a single large cut, the natural place for it is in the upper middle of the page. Many papers use a cartoon on page one instead of illustrative "art." (All cuts rank as art in newspaper parlance.) If more than one cut is used, the larger will usually be given the left-hand position. A single one-column cut, all alone on the page, might look like a spot or a lonely desert island; if the cuts are small, therefore, it is better to use more than one, placing them at related, although not necessarily exactly the same, distances from the right and left edges of

the page. A large cut is never placed in a lower position than a small one, for the same reason that the larger heads are given top position. Cuts should not be placed in either of the extreme outer columns. Without a frame of type they look as if they were falling off the edge. When several illustrations are used for the same story, they are not placed separately but are grouped together in a "layout" from which a single cut is made.

The same principles of balance apply to the inside pages of the paper as to page one. The problem here is further complicated by the introduction of advertisements. In making up the paper the advertisements are placed first, and the type is arranged around them. In so far as it is possible to do so, the advertisements are "pyramided" from left to right, the largest on the bottom, thus:



The front page is almost always kept clear of advertisements; and many papers, especially those which carry very heavy advertising, also "clear" pages two and three lest the reader feel that he is getting more advertising than news.

The back page may be a straight news page, or it may be assigned as the editorial page. All "special" pages — editorial, sports, magazine features — should be given the same position each day, so that the specially interested reader may know where to look for them. The same principle applies to a regular daily feature or column which occupies less than a full page.

No other part of the newspaper has shown a greater tendency to change than the make-up of the editorial page.

Some ultra conservative papers still cling to the old-style editorial page, with its single-column, one-line, small-type heads. But the modern tendency is to realize that it is just as important to compel attention to the editorial page by "window dressing" as to call attention to the main news on page one. The result has been a gradual "dressing up" of the editorial page by the use of cartoons, special articles and features, cuts, poems, and ornamental type devices known as "dingbats."

The making up of a paper is a technic which can be learned only by experience. It is like fitting together the bits of an elaborate mosaic. The bits are of different shapes and sizes; and they must not only be placed to fit, but the whole must form a pleasing design to the eye. The novice confronted with this problem will first get a type book and study it until, like Adam, he can call all the animals by name. He will then do his juggling by means of a "dummy," measuring off a sheet of paper in the requisite number of columns and planning his design. By measuring the length of the stories at his disposal in galley proof and allowing for the depth of the heads he has chosen, he can fit them into their procrustean bed. The editor of the amateur paper will soon learn to insist on a plentiful supply of "shorts" which can be used to fill odd spaces. The difference between attractive, carefully planned make-up and a page which has been carelessly thrown together is so great as to repay the utmost care and effort to master the technical requirements.

EXERCISES

1. Analyze the headlines in your local paper (1) for interest, (2) for accurate relation to the story, (3) for style.

2. Using the headline counts given in the illustrations to this

chapter write a series of headlines of various styles for the "first break" and the "follow" stories in the Macbeth case.

3. Pick out the best headlines in your local paper on a given day and give your reasons.

4. Compare the heads given to the same story in two different papers and criticize their relative merits.

5. Write a two-column caption for the photograph which you have obtained of Lady Macbeth, with about 50 words to go under the picture. Do the same for the photograph of King Duncan.

6. Write one-column captions for the above.

7. Write a caption for a four-column layout which includes Duncan's castle, Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and Duncan. (40 letters and spaces over-line, 100 words below.)

8. Analyze an issue of your local paper, marking the straight news stories, feature stories and freaks, and note the styles of heads used for the different types of stories.

9. What are the chief differences between modern headlines and those of thirty to fifty years ago, and what are the main reasons for the change?

10. Study the make-up of the first page of several different newspapers. Compare them for general style and also for conformity to the principle of balance.

11. Does your local newspaper follow a horizontal or vertical make-up? Light or dark? Break-over or wrap-around?

12. How many stories are on the front page?

13. Look up examples (if necessary, in the public library) of a conservative and a modernist editorial page. Which do you prefer? Why?

14. Do you yourself read the editorial page? Why or why not?

15. Which type of make-up for news and editorials do you think would be most appropriate for a student paper? Give reasons.

16. Do you yourself prefer a sensational or conservative type of make-up? Give reasons.

XVII

ETHICS OF REPORTING

The ethics of the newspaper as an institution are in the keeping of the publisher and editor. If the reporter believes the standards of the paper on which he works to be low or mistaken, he has only one recourse — to leave the paper. But though he is not responsible for the general attitude of the newspaper toward the public, the reporter in the securing and writing of news is in direct contact with that public, and the problems that arise out of this relation are immediate and severely practical. These problems fall into three general classes: efforts to keep him from getting the story, and the dividing line between legitimate and illegitimate means of combatting these efforts; efforts to influence the story through threats, bribes, or more subtle means; and the question of "privilege" — that is, the extent to which information secured for news purposes may be held confidential.

No abstract code can possibly cover all the questions that arise in the relation of the reporter to the obtaining and writing of the news. His own intelligence, common sense, and sense of honor as to what "is done" and what "is not done" must be his final and individual arbiter. A code cannot in the nature of things be more than a skeleton diagram, but as an indication of prevailing standards various newspapers have drawn up tables of suggestions for their reporters. A typical practical code of this character is that of the St. Joseph (Missouri) *News-Press*, which includes the following paragraphs:

" Be careful of the reputation of a woman. Better miss a good story than harm the reputation of an innocent woman.

" The *News-Press* does not print the names of boys or girls under fifteen who get into trouble unless they are sentenced to a reformatory by the juvenile court. There is enough news without bringing ignominy on children needlessly.

" The *News-Press* does not use the words *adultery, rape, incest, sodomy,* or *abortion.* It does not go into minute details describing wounds in violent deaths, nor does it specify the poison by name in deaths by poisoning except in rare instances where the ends of justice may be served.

" Exercise diligence in religious stories or news items about ministers of the gospel or churches. You may not be sensitive about your religion. The man or woman you write about may be very sensitive.

" In news of a controversial nature, get both sides of the story. If a story breaks that gives a public official a chance for denial or explanation, get both sides. If a laborer is accused of assault and wants to enter a denial, let him.

" Avoid errors, but if you make one do not refuse to make a correction. A correction should be made the next day, not a week or two later.

" Fake stories are taboo. Faking in minor items leads to carelessness with the truth in more important stories. We want the dramatic where it exists but do not want it manufactured. If readers see a story obviously faked they will think other stories are, and the paper loses its prestige.

" Exercise caution in dealing with racial antecedents. . . . If an alien goes to prison his nationality is not necessarily a part of the news, but if the authorities consider deporting him it is.

" Avoid propaganda. The man who has something he is

anxious to get in the paper may be as dangerous as the man who wants something kept out. Submit such requests to the desk.

"Always write as if you were to read the article aloud before the publisher and managing editor."

Kennedy Crone, writing for Canadian newspaper men, suggests among others the following rules of news ethics and etiquette, which are as applicable to the reporters of the United States as to those of Canada:

"Do not criticise your own newspaper outside of the office.

"It is a questionable policy to accept gifts from outsiders. The taking of a bribe is the most contemptible act a reporter may commit.

"Punctuality is essential — keep appointments to the minute.

"Courtesy, tact, and patience, even in the face of rudeness and obvious dislocation of ideas in persons with whom you come in contact, are necessary to a successful reporter; but this does not mean that there should be any lack of independence.

"A quiet, confident, straightforward persistence wins. A noisy, overbearing, learned air is a hindrance to getting news.

"Let the scoffers scoff as they may, the cardinal principle of good reporting is accuracy.

"Don't conceal some facts because they may take a point out of your story or spoil a nice turn in phraseology.

"Get names and initials right.

"If you have a piece of good news that seems exclusive, don't tell your friends or you will lose it to a rival.

"Always see the person at the head of affairs; a lesser light may lead you astray and you have no excuse.

"Get both sides of a story.

" Don't let your personal likes or prejudices interfere.

" Outsiders in good faith often make positive statements which are not accurate or not complete, or are colored by a personal viewpoint. Distortion is particularly evident in outsiders' versions of exciting events. Don't take a chance — verify.

" Don't leave out or put in what some outsider orders or desires. Promise to place the matter before the city editor. News is the property of the newspaper.

" Don't allow yourself to be intimidated. Tell the whole story to the city editor."

The variety of questions considered in these guides to conduct shows that the reporter has a three-fold relation to consider: his duty to his paper, to the reading public, and to his news sources. The practical adjustment of these relations depends in large measure on individual character and experience. The reporter is sent out with a single blanket instruction: " Get the story." The lengths to which he will go and the tactics he will use depend on his own judgment. Sometimes his own sense of honor will demand that he forego the story rather than obtain it by conscienceless methods. Sometimes loyalty to his paper and its readers will lead him to use methods which he would not employ in his private affairs. Sometimes he must decide whether the honor of the paper is best served by success or failure on a given story.

Circumstances vary so greatly and are frequently so complex that they refuse to fall into any prearranged pigeonholes. Yet so far as each particular story is concerned, the reputation of his paper, both for honorable conduct and for success in obtaining the news, is in the reporter's hands. The one unpardonable sin of the reporter is to " let his paper down " on either of these counts. Yet he cannot go home and search his conscience over night.

His decision must be made quickly, and he must learn to be both sensitive and decisive enough to trust that his snap judgment in an emergency will be upheld both by his editor and by his own later analysis.

One of the most frequent choices confronting the reporter is whether to seek the support of authority, to attempt to get the story independently, or to run counter to direct prohibition on the part of the authorities. Direct assistance may be extremely helpful if it can be obtained, especially when it may be doubtful whether the required information will be given out without some such official aid. On the other hand, to ask and run the risk of refusal may plunge the reporter into the third difficulty — that of defying a direct prohibition.

The question here is one of expediency rather than of ethics. The newspaper maintains that its responsibility is directly to its readers and that it need recognize no outside authority or require any permission to get and print the news.

For example, a suspected criminal was being held in jail in town A at the request of the police of town B. A reporter was sent from B to A, with permission to ask the prisoner to pose for a picture, on condition that there should be no attempt at an interview before the police of B had had an opportunity to question the prisoner. Arriving at A, the reporter found a reporter from a rival paper interviewing the prisoner. The second reporter, having asked no permission, was under no obligation. Was the first reporter then justified in interviewing the prisoner? He decided that he was not held by a promise which would involve allowing the rival paper a scoop on the story — and the chief of police, when the circumstances were explained, agreed with him.

Byron H. Christian, himself a newspaper man and at

present an instructor of journalism at the University of Washington, collected for *Editor and Publisher* a group of problems of conduct such as frequently confront the reporter. His first case is that of a reporter who tracked down a man believed to have been a witness of an important crime. The reporter was equipped with a police badge, and the witness, intimidated by the supposed sign of authority, gave the information sought. Was the reporter justified? Christian believes that the majority of editors and reporters would consider the incident a clear violation of newspaper ethics. But suppose, instead of being a witness, the man had been himself suspected of the crime. In California, a reporter was placed over night in the cell of a man accused of murder, posing as a murderer himself, for the purpose of attempting to obtain a confession. Did the fact that in this case the police knew of and in fact authorized the ruse justify the reporter? Did the fact that the man was suspected of crime justify him? Did the fact that the confession, if obtained, would both serve the ends of justice and give his paper a scoop justify him?

Here is another case quoted by Christian: "A prominent Russian was found dead in his rooms. He had killed himself shortly before he was to marry a young woman in this particular city. The reporter arrived at the scene ahead of the authorities. Spread out on the table was a love letter written by the suicide to another woman. It explained his motive. The reporter faced the question whether to telephone the contents of the letter to the city editor or to wait for the authorities to arrive. He chose the former course on the ground that the authorities might refuse to let him have the letter, especially since it involved a prominent family in the city."

Most city editors would hold that the reporter in this case was entitled to the fruits of his enterprise in reaching

the scene ahead of the police. But suppose he had been admitted to the house by the police and had then discovered the letter before they did. Should he pocket the letter to take back to his office or turn it over to the authorities? Probably his solution of the problem would be to copy the letter and then turn the original over to the police, maintaining that the contents belonged to his paper by right of discovery.

Another problem proposed in Christian's article is the following: "To withhold a story because an advertiser is involved or a gratuity offered would incense all self-respecting reporters. But how about the story that involves a long friendship? A court house reporter got a story of a minor divorce case, which was in no way sensational, but the policy of the paper was to print divorces. The man principal in the case had been a life-long friend of the reporter and begged him not to turn the story over to the city editor as its publication would injure him more than it would do the general public any good. The reporter passed up the story. Suppose, however, that the man had had no friends on the paper? Should the reporter have suppressed the story?"

Since the story was not told him privately by his friend but was found by the reporter in the course of covering his beat, he had no right to suppress it. One city editor to whom the question was propounded replied as follows:

"A reporter's obligation to his paper and its public is absolute; he has no right to play favorites. In doing so he is false to his trust. If a matter of real news comes to his attention, even outside of working hours and in his private capacity, I am inclined to maintain that it belongs to his paper. If a story is suppressed for personal reasons, an injustice is wrought to the paper, its readers, and to all the other people whose similar stories are not suppressed."

The son of a prominent newspaper publisher became involved in a course of conduct entailing scandal and disgrace. When the story reached the office, it was taken to the owner with the expectation that it would be withheld. This the publisher refused to do.

"I have declined to suppress stories about other men's sons when they were news — therefore I cannot suppress this one," he said.

The reporter who understands that man — and who believes that he would have had the courage to make the same decision — may find many details of conduct bewildering, but he has learned the first great principle in the code of newspaper honor: to play no favorites and to suppress no legitimate news.

What should be the reporter's attitude toward information given him under a seal of secrecy? The question may arise in a variety of circumstances and is one of the most troublesome which he is called upon to answer. It may be assumed that in a formal interview for press purposes, whatever the speaker says "may be used against him." It is his business to avoid statements which he is unwilling should be made public. On the other hand, no one would like to feel the necessity of being perpetually on his guard, even on social occasions, in the presence of a reporter. The answer, of course, is that he need not be. Information obtained in the course of casual conversation is seldom news as it stands; it is at best a "tip" to news. In order to become news it must be investigated and verified.

But what about even these tips to news if they are given in confidence? Such confidences are dangerous and should be avoided whenever possible. The reporter who accepts them is in an ambiguous position. His hands are so tied that he may feel himself bound not to get the same story by his own independent efforts. He may then find that another paper,

not thus handicapped, has broken the story. Furthermore, if the story comes to his own paper from other sources, the person who gave him the confidential information will almost certainly accuse him of having broken the confidence. The reporter bound by personal promises is seriously handicapped in the performance of his duty — his one safe course is to make such promises only in exceptional circumstances.

A doctor cannot be compelled to testify as to professional conversations between himself and his patients, nor a lawyer as to information obtained from a client, nor a priest or minister as to what has been told him by persons seeking his professional advice. The relations between doctor and patient, lawyer and client, minister and members of his congregation, are legally privileged. At the present time, communications between reporters and news sources are not so held in all states; but there is a growing tendency on the part of reporters to maintain a moral right to refuse to give out the sources of their information, even when subpoenaed in court for the purpose.

In 1929, three reporters on the Washington *Times* were engaged in reporting prohibition conditions in their city. They obtained information on prohibition violations for their paper on condition that they would not reveal the names of their informants. There is a difference here between receiving the information itself as confidential, and being given it for publication with the proviso that its source should be withheld; the source was no part of the story. When called upon by the federal grand jury to give out the names of their informants, the three reporters accepted a jail sentence of forty-five days for contempt of court rather than break faith. Similarly, a Washington correspondent refused to give an investigating committee the name of a congressman who had furnished him with information of the voting on a public question.

The legal problem is one for the state legislatures to decide. Maryland has had a law in force for more than thirty years exempting newspaper men from being required to reveal the sources of information obtained for purposes of newspaper publication. This law is based on the guaranty of freedom of the press as expressed in the Bill of Rights included in the Constitution of the United States. A bill has been introduced in Congress, "exempting newspaper men from testifying with respect to the sources of certain confidential information" in all cases except treason, before the federal courts, District of Columbia courts and grand jury, and Congress or any committee of either the Senate or the House of Representatives.

Newspaper editors and publishers are unanimous in holding that news sources should be held as confidential and privileged, even though the law does not as yet uphold this view in all states. The reporter's moral obligation in this regard is one of the most firmly established portions of the ethical code of his craft.

EXERCISES

1. "A reporter was told by the city editor to cover a meeting of a labor organization which the paper had opposed. He was told to get into the meeting, even if he had to represent himself as a reporter from a rival paper, favored by this labor group. It developed that that was the only way to gain admittance, and he used it. Another reporter got an interview from a celebrity visiting his city by representing himself as a member of the welcoming committee of the Chamber of Commerce." (Byron H. Christian in *Editor and Publisher*.) Was either case of misrepresentation justified?

2. A reporter visited a house in which a supposed bank bandit had been found by the police, and was told by a woman in the house that the man sought had during the past month put in a

number of long distance telephone calls to another city. In order to find out the numbers called, the reporter went to the main telephone office and posed as the householder, asking for a duplicate of the month's bill. Was this justified? (Telephone bills are given to no one but the subscriber, except by court order.)

3. "A picture of a young woman, who had received recognition in a national contest, was wanted. The family would probably not object, but the family was not at home when the reporter called. The front door was ajar. The reporter saw the photograph on the mantel." (Christian.) Should the reporter take the picture?

4. "Another reporter tried to get from the family a picture of a young woman drowned when a sail boat capsized. The family refused to give up the picture. The reporter remembered the young woman was a university graduate and, being resourceful, hunted up the college annual for that year. He found the name of the photographer who took the class pictures, went to the studio, and induced the photographer to give him a print for a nominal sum and a credit line." (Christian.) Had the reporter the right to get the picture if he could, against the wishes of the family? In considering the ethics of this question, remember that news is often obtained from outside sources against the wishes of those concerned.

5. A woman whose husband was involved in sensational bigamy charges (not brought by herself) told a reporter that she was self-supporting and would lose her job if her name was brought into the story. Should he (a) tell the city editor that he had failed to find the woman, (b) lay the facts before the editor and abide by his decision, (c) tell the editor that he refused to write the story?

6. A reporter obtained from a suspected criminal a frank though indiscreet statement amounting to a confession which detectives had been unable to get. The reporter was asked to appear as a prosecution witness and refused to testify on the grounds that it was not his business to do the work of the police and that his ability to get similar interviews for his paper in the future would be seriously handicapped if he appeared in court

against the person so interviewed. Was it his duty as a citizen to testify? Although the criminal knew that the interview was for publication, there was no warning that her statements might be used against her in court; should this fact be taken into consideration by the reporter in making his decision? If subpoenaed despite his objections should he (a) say that he did not remember details of the conversation, (b) accept a fine or sentence for contempt of court, (c) ask his paper to use influence to have the subpoena withdrawn?

XVIII

JOURNALISTIC STYLE

The term *newspaper English* or *journalese* is sometimes used as a synonym for careless, slovenly writing — often by persons who could not themselves write a paragraph which would pass the copy desk unedited. But although the requirements of speed necessitate that newspaper copy should be written quickly, with scant opportunity for revision, this requirement does not release the writer from his obligation to write carefully and correctly. On the contrary, the mind of a good reporter must be so nimble and well trained that adherence to the fundamental rules of good English becomes second nature to him. His first draft is very likely to be the final one. Knowing this, and with his attention necessarily focused on his subject matter rather than on niceties of expression, the competent reporter reaches the point where habit or the subconscious makes it virtually impossible for him to write a sentence which violates the major rules of grammatical construction. He has, in fact, in this respect far less latitude than is allowed the novelist or poet, whose creative genius or experiments in technic frequently lead him to write copy which violates accepted standards of composition.

Appropriateness governs to a certain extent the style of newspaper writing, as a similar appropriateness governs the style of other literary forms. A news story, the closing argument of an attorney in a legal case, a lyric poem, a political speech, and a novel may each be a classic

of its kind; but a news story written like a lyric poem is as unsuited to its medium as a novel written like a legal argument. These limitations of newspaper style, governed, as all good writing is governed, by its purpose, do not, however, mean that there is a rigid set of rules destroying all individuality of expression. The United Press Manual heads its set of directions on style with the statement: "Distinctive writing does more to get a story printed than anything else except getting the story first or exclusively."

Different papers have their own preferences in literary style, usually defined by the type of reader to whom the paper makes its appeal. William Randolph Hearst, for example, gives the direction: "Condense everything. Tell everything vividly. Use plenty of pictures. Make a paper that is easy to read, and easy to read quickly." Not all editors and publishers demand the same degree of condensation, or place the same emphasis on quick and easy reading, since their circulation may be of a class that is able and willing to take more time and use a greater amount of energy. But all papers, so far from allowing careless, slovenly, and lazy writing, are agreed that the manner in which a story is written is of utmost importance — so important that paragraphs on the subject are included in any codes or suggestions which they may compile for their staffs. From these directions, issued by individual papers, something may be learned as to the fundamentals on which most emphasis is laid.

The code already quoted, compiled by the St. Joseph, (Missouri) *News-Press*, includes the following injunctions on newspaper style:

"The *News-Press* is a well edited paper. Help keep it that way. Avoid slang or writing in a low tone.

"Write copy as if it were going in the paper without further editing except by yourself. Do not be ashamed to

consult a dictionary every five minutes. The better the reporter, the more he consults a dictionary, and vice versa, it might be said. When in doubt, do not guess.

"More important than the dictionary are the directories. The desk may know the spelling of words in the dictionary, but copy readers cannot check up the city and telephone directories for you.

"Be concise. If a story can be told in a 'brevity,' why use half a column?

"Always write as if you were to read the article aloud before the publisher and managing editor."

Kennedy Crone offers the following suggestions in a booklet called *Coaching the Cub:*

"Copy requiring more than the normal amount of editing is expensive.

"Frame your story in your mind before you write it.

"Avoid fancy phrases and big words. Be simple, crisp, and direct of phrase.

"Walt Whitman said: 'The art of arts, the glory of expression, and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity — nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness.'

"Stick like glue to the Anglo-Saxon."

The United Press Manual contains the following directions to its correspondents under the heading, "United Presstyle":

"Distinctive writing does more to get a story printed than anything else except getting the story first or exclusively.

"Get the name of the person in the story right. Nothing so irritates any one as to see his name misspelled or his initials wrong.

"Direct approach is the best way of starting a story; do not begin sentences with participles, subordinate clauses, and

the like. Make your statements in the natural order of subject first, then the verb, etc.

"In writing a set story, keep it consecutive. Be coherent. Write simply. Before you start a big story on which you've plenty of time, get the picture of your entire story in your mind. Keep on top of it; don't let it snow you, the wire, or readers under.

"The short sentence is one of the most effective things in newspaper writing.

"Avoid the strictly routine and stodgy lead. On the other hand, do not expect to achieve color and drama by over-filling it with adjectives.

"Almost every big story has elements of color, drama, or feature about it. The news of this story should of course be the lead, told clearly and concisely. Thereafter, the writer can swing in the color angles and the feature material.

"A story should never start with a direct quotation or with figures. If there is a mine accident or a train wreck, the lead of the story is what has happened and of next importance is the result, namely, how many killed or injured.

"Obscure or technical terms must be put into simple English in explanatory notes to make them understandable."

These three sets of directions, and the Hearst dictum already quoted, apply to widely different newspaper conditions, yet they show a substantial agreement in listing the fundamental rules of good newspaper style. They show that approved newspaper English, so far from being a haphazard affair, has been made a subject of careful study and is considered of importance second only to the substance of the news.

It is safe to say that no reporter was ever fired because he wrote too well — although he may have thought so, be-

cause in his own mind he confused good writing with " fine " writing in the sense of affectation and mannerism, vagueness, pomposity, or longwindedness. Every editor wants writing that is as good as he can get it — goodness in this as in other respects meaning, as Aristotle pointed out long ago, a perfect adjustment to its specific purpose. A news story may not resemble De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* — in fact, if it did, it would not be good newspaper writing.

Much newspaper writing falls below the highest standards, just as much novel writing and poetry writing and playwriting fall below the standard of the masterpiece. There are not enough masters in any field to constitute its entire personnel. But if no reporter was ever fired for writing too well, large numbers have been dismissed because they wrote too badly, with faulty sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

It is true that the language used in newspapers differs in some respects from that used in formal literary essays. The English of the daily papers is essentially a living, changing tongue. Newspapers are in a sense an experimental laboratory of diction. Many expressions are tried out, tentatively accepted, perhaps discarded, perhaps retained until they cease to make shudders play up and down the spine of the purist and become embedded in the language. In other words, newspaper English follows current colloquial speech.

The words *holdup* and *footpad* are now accepted by the most conservative, although their colloquial origin is obvious. *Mob* was originally a slang contraction. *Bootlegger* and *hijacker* have entered the language via the news, because it was necessary to coin new words to meet new conditions. The newspapers are responsible for the victory of the simpler form *airplane* over the more ornate *aeroplane*. Such

words as *enthuse, climax* as a verb (the shooting climaxed a night of revelry) and *defi* as a noun (a headline coinage in the interests of the space count) are not yet established as accepted newspaper diction, although they are widely used on the less conservative papers; but if their terseness fills a genuine need in the language they will eventually be admitted into the best society. *Phone* for *telephone* is still on the border line and is banned as a barbarism by the purist, as is the word *wire* as a verb meaning telegraph (but the adjective *wire* as in " leased wire service " is accepted). It may well be remembered, however, that *drawing room* is a contraction of *withdrawing room* and that *wash stand* was originally *wash hand stand,* and more recent contractions may follow these into formal acceptance.

On the other hand, so far as sentence structure is concerned, the newspaper is conservative — far more conservative than modernist fiction or verse. Both its modernism in diction and its conservatism in grammatical construction are due to the same cause — appropriateness to the public addressed. The average reader readily takes new words into his vocabulary but is less ready to accept dots and dashes, nouns without verbs, words scattered without grammatical connection, and similar innovations in sentence structure.

Although newspaper writing has its special technic determined by its function, the qualities of newspaper style on which chief stress is laid are well worth cultivating for their general value. *Journalese* need not be used as a term of reproach. A training in newspaper writing, so far from inculcating bad habits, lays an excellent foundation for writing in other fields. It is safe to say that no one's literary style has ever been ruined, and that the style of many has been greatly improved, by submitting to the restraints and striving for the qualities of good newspaper writing. Of

course news writing may be commonplace and machine made, but the same thing is true of novel writing or any other literary form. Sound technic is an aid rather than a hindrance to individual expression.

All laws of journalistic style reduce to two: it must be accurate and it must be interesting. Everything else is a means which experience has shown to be conducive to these two ends.

Accuracy is something more than a careful checking of names and addresses. Carefulness in detail leads to a habit of close observation, an objective attitude which looks closely and keenly at the world outside and rejects the fog of generalities and the vagueness and one-sidedness which come from turning the gaze constantly inward.

This objectivity is the only road to an understanding of character. In fact, the essentially objective mind is the only one capable of understanding itself as well as others, which is the only basis of real introspection. This deeper implication of accuracy means, in diction, the choice of the exact word to express a meaning. It carries with it clearness, vividness, and that restraint which conveys a mastery of material. The reporter learns to concentrate on the story itself, not on his own feelings about it. In doing so, he recognizes that emotions themselves are facts and learns to watch their effects. This in itself will lead the writer away from vagueness and from reliance on well-worn adjectives instead of on a fresh effort to see clearly and record exactly.

G. B. Dibblee, in his book, *The Newspaper,* thus summarizes the objective attitude demanded of the reporter: "An American reporter is not allowed to say that a meeting was successful or that the statesman was eloquent or that the confusion around the railroad wreck baffled description. His professional duties require that he should report only what the statesman said and what his audience thought of

him, and if his powers of description are to be baffled by a railway accident he will soon be out of a job."

In order to be interesting a story must be both clear and vivid. The reader must understand what the writer intends to convey and must, in so far as possible, imaginatively share in the effect as if he were himself a part of what he reads. This demand for clearness includes simplicity and conciseness. Not all editors would subscribe to the arbitrary limit of fifteen words to the sentence imposed by Hearst on writers for his papers, but this limit is probably not to be interpreted literally — it is rather a concrete and emphatic way of stating a general principle.

It requires far more effort and intelligence to express an idea clearly and simply than to wrap it in long, involved sentences. The almost illiterate person, struggling to reduce his meaning to words, will practically always be found to use long and rambling sentences, as if every ramification of an idea must be tumbled in between periods; while the most austere artists, such as Anatole France and Katherine Mansfield, have left on record the pains they took to attain a crystalline simplicity. Although the purpose of the newspaper editor in demanding short sentences is the practical need of making the material interesting and intelligible at first reading, the practice sets the newspaper writer on the road followed by the highest artists.

The practical reason for demanding conciseness in news writing is partly to keep the reader's interest from flagging and partly to allow room for all the news which must be printed. But here again the practical demand results in excellent literary training. To write as concisely as possible requires a close organization of material, every part contributing directly to the whole, and a sense of proportion which seizes upon the most important points and relates them to subsidiary elements. Although the works

of some writers of genius have lacked this economy and architectural character, or have deliberately sacrificed it to other ends, their apparent verbosity and formlessness are in reality a subtler and more complex form. Such writers, if their productions are authentic works of art, have mastered form before they undertook to flout it.

Many newspaper men and women, like men and women in other occupations, are content to practice their craft without looking beyond it. They may obey its rules mechanically. But the young man or woman who desires specific training for what is called creative writing — that is, writing for which the subject matter is constructed by the imagination instead of being presented ready-made — could hardly find better lessons to follow than those of clearness, conciseness, simplicity, vividness, and objectivity, which go to make up the approved style of newspaper English.

The newspaper is addressed directly to definite readers. All writing, however much the author may declare that he is concerned only with self expression and writes for himself alone regardless of any public, is in reality addressed to a reader. Otherwise the urge to self expression would be adequately served by reveries without the work of setting them down in words. Words themselves exist for communication, and communication implies a receiver as well as a sender. The person who insists that he writes purely for self expression means that he cares to communicate only with others who are exactly like himself; he resents the harsh impact of outside reality with its risk of adverse criticism and rejection. The newspaper writer, on the other hand, must communicate with readers who are often very unlike himself. He may not wish to address that public exclusively, but by understanding the character and needs of one class of public he is better equipped to under-

stand other classes. In doing so he is forced to recognize the two-fold aspect of all language communication.

The two primary requirements of newspaper style — that it should be accurate and that it should be interesting — apply with equal force to other forms of writing. If what is written is interesting to no one but the author, it will not be read by any one else and might just as well not have been written. If it is not accurate, it will lack not only that appreciation and respect for all reality which entails fidelity of observation, but it will also lack that deeper accuracy which makes for intellectual sincerity and emotional truth.

The classroom student will find the same benefits from a newswriting course as the professional writer gains from newspaper experience. His writing is focused on a definite purpose. Its subject matter and treatment must be particular instead of general — and just as it is easier to write long sentences than short ones, it is much easier to write of large general ideas than to keep to the actual and concrete subject. His compositions must have point, organization, and climax — there is no place in news writing for mere rambling narration or description. The topics of such compositions are related to the real world of which the student is a part. Vagueness, platitude, and a rehashing of second-hand ideas are barred. Most important of all, the student writer learns to look outside himself for his interest and his subject matter. Instead of wondering what to write about, or "thinking of his thoughts and feeling of his feelings," he will turn his gaze upon a world of unending variety, piquancy, and interest, a world filled with human beings and their behavior, challenging his curiosity and powers of understanding — the world of news.

EXERCISES

1. Find in the daily paper (not necessarily all in one issue) striking examples of (1) vividness, (2) conciseness, (3) clearness and simplicity in presenting a complicated subject.

2. The active voice is preferred to the passive in news writing. Why?

3. Find, if you can, a story which seems to you to be "over written" and rewrite it.

4. Why would the style of De Quincey be out of place in newspaper writing?

5. What words do you find in the newspaper, if any, which would be out of place in a formal essay?

6. In what respects would newspaper writing offer good preliminary training for a novelist? A writer on scientific subjects? A business man? A lawyer?

7. In what ways are the special requirements of newspaper style appropriate to the medium for which newspaper stories are written?

8. Why are writers on the Hearst papers particularly urged to use plenty of pictures and make a paper that is easy to read quickly? Why are they asked to limit their sentences to fifteen words?

9. Why is the average newspaper paragraph shorter than the average book paragraph?

10. Do you think that newspaper style has affected modern style in other forms of writing? In what respects? Give examples.

11. Do you agree with the writer that newspaper writing is good literary training? If not, support your argument on the opposite side.

12. How does the news story on the electrocution of four negroes, quoted in the chapter on the news story, fulfill the requirements of good newspaper style?

"September 21, when standing alone. September 21, 1910; 21st of September, 2d of August, are correct.

"Time, in races: 0:1-5, 2:15; 1h. 4m. 3s; 75-yard dash.

"229 A Montgomery street is correct.

"All numbered streets and avenues to be spelled out.

"Spell out early seventies, the nineteenth century, a forty-niner.

"Do not use 'No.' in amendment 1, Engine Company 2, street numbers.

"Rev. Mr. Brown or Rev. E. J. Brown, not 'the' Rev. Brown.

"Never use Mr., Hon., or Esq., unless ordered or when quoting some one else.

"Except in the titles Chief of Police and Captain of Detectives, Police Captain Jones, Police Sergeant Jones, etc., are correct instead of Captain of Police Jones, etc.

"Public officials are well enough known when their titles precede their names to make District-Attorney Brady, Superior Judge Ward, and Mayor Rolph sufficient and preferable to District-Attorney Matthew Brady, Superior Judge Louis H. Ward, or Mayor James Rolph, Jr.

"In resolutions, each Resolved should commence a paragraph, with succeeding word capitalized after comma.

"A suit of rooms, a suit of furniture, but three rooms en suite.

"All words ending with room, boat, house, ball, weight, ship, etc., where first part is a word of one syllable, should be one word. When of two or more syllables use dining room, instruction room, battle ship, ferry boat, etc.

"Capitalize the Union, the Government, the Federal Government, the Nation, etc.

"Capitalize club, company, association, court, etc., where full name is given, such as Olympic Club, etc.

"Capitalize The Chronicle, Chronicle Building."

"dirty copy" which because of the carelessness or indifference of the writer must be extensively edited.

The best advice to be given on typographical style is: Watch the style of your paper and follow it. It is impossible to know in advance whether your paper capitalizes the words street and avenue when preceded by name or number or whether it gives the initial letter of these words in lower case; whether it uses the form District-Attorney or District Attorney; whether it requires the given names of public officials with their titles or prefers the title to be followed only by the last name; whether it places the names of newspapers, books, and magazines within quotation marks; whether it uses the form *&c.* or *etc.* for *and so forth;* whether in lists of officers the office precedes or follows the name.

These and numerous other questions of usage cannot possibly be answered in advance. There is no right or wrong about them. The only requirement is that the newspaper should adopt a style on such technical matters and follow it consistently throughout. The editors of a student paper should therefore compile a style sheet, probably by a comparison of various models in use on commercial newspapers, and insist that all writers should conform to it. Even dictionaries differ on preferred usage as to hyphens, spelling, and the like. The office should therefore select one of the standard dictionaries as its arbiter on these and similar points.

The following rules in force on the San Francisco *Chronicle* are given as a sample of the forms most frequently requiring office standardization:

"Men's ages, hours of the day, per cent., all definite sums of money, days of month and year, go in figures. In general matter, other than statistical tables, etc., spell out figures under 100.

"September 21, when standing alone. September 21, 1910; 21st of September, 2d of August, are correct.

"Time, in races: 0:1-5, 2:15; 1h. 4m. 3s; 75-yard dash.

"229 A Montgomery street is correct.

"All numbered streets and avenues to be spelled out.

"Spell out early seventies, the nineteenth century, a forty-niner.

"Do not use 'No.' in amendment 1, Engine Company 2, street numbers.

"Rev. Mr. Brown or Rev. E. J. Brown, not 'the' Rev. Brown.

"Never use Mr., Hon., or Esq., unless ordered or when quoting some one else.

"Except in the titles Chief of Police and Captain of Detectives, Police Captain Jones, Police Sergeant Jones, etc., are correct instead of Captain of Police Jones, etc.

"Public officials are well enough known when their titles precede their names to make District-Attorney Brady, Superior Judge Ward, and Mayor Rolph sufficient and preferable to District-Attorney Matthew Brady, Superior Judge Louis H. Ward, or Mayor James Rolph, Jr.

"In resolutions, each Resolved should commence a paragraph, with succeeding word capitalized after comma.

"A suit of rooms, a suit of furniture, but three rooms en suite.

"All words ending with room, boat, house, ball, weight, ship, etc., where first part is a word of one syllable, should be one word. When of two or more syllables use dining room, instruction room, battle ship, ferry boat, etc.

"Capitalize the Union, the Government, the Federal Government, the Nation, etc.

"Capitalize club, company, association, court, etc., where full name is given, such as Olympic Club, etc.

"Capitalize The Chronicle, Chronicle Building."

Rules as to diction and phraseology are of more general application. Some papers are more strict than others in this respect, but the reporter who uses words in their exact and logical meaning, avoids shopworn expressions, and exercises care in grammatical construction will find that it is worth while to write as carefully as possible instead of being content merely to "get by." His next job may be on a paper more exacting in its standards.

"Nothing so ruins newspaper copy as bromidic expressions," says the United Press Manual, and lists the following "bromides": setting the stage; behind closed doors; took steps; prisoner was grilled; conducted an investigation (for investigated); probe or quiz (for investigation); flayed; combing the country; nationwide dragnet (or in fact any dragnets when applied to pursuits); keen blade (referring to golf irons); pool of blood; reign of terror; one armed bandit (or any other number of armed bandits) or lone bandit; took the witness stand; hot Latin blood; took the field (in sports copy); hooch, booze, etc. (for liquor); love nest, love child, and all other uses of "love" to convey an idea of illicit relationship; took the center of the stage; in the spotlight (or limelight); ambulances (or police) "rushed" to the scene; sawed-off shotguns (except when that's what they actually are); high powered motor cars; hot on the trail; Dan Cupid; Jupiter Pluvius; quiet wedding.

To these may be added: plied with liquor; made his escape (for escaped); kiddie, babe, or tot (for child); in our midst; whilst (for while); bobbed haired bandit; young and pretty (unless the subject's pulchritude has something to do with the story); groom (for bridegroom); meet (for meeting); pact (for agreement); the woman Jones (this is gratuitously insulting; if you don't want to say Miss Nellie Jones, say plain Nellie Jones).

Enthuse, climax (as a verb), defi (a manufactured noun), phone, photo, and wire (for telegraph) have not yet been accepted as good usage.

By the avoidance of these expressions (and the list could be lengthened almost indefinitely) a story gains in distinction, vividness, and good taste and loses nothing of value.

Words and expressions which are incorrect in themselves and not merely overworked or in questionable taste are sure of a place on any newspaper's blacklist, although they sometimes creep in unawares. Any list approaching completeness would of course be impossible, but the following errors deserve a special word of caution:

Dove as a verb. The past tense of dive is dived.

Proven. The past tense of prove is proved.

Pled. The past tense of plead is pleaded.

Broadcasted. The past tense of broadcast is broadcast.

Hung, as applied to capital punishment. The past tense of hang in this sense is hanged.

Strata and data followed by a singular verb. The singular of these is stratum and datum.

Beside for besides. Beside refers to position; besides means in addition to.

In back of (for behind). In front of, however, is correct.

It is proper to speak of an insoluble problem; unsolvable is also allowed.

Wife for widow; or the widow of the late John Jones ("late" is unnecessary).

Unknown for unidentified. (As in "An unknown man was found dead on the railroad track." Every one is known to some one).

Trite for terse. The meaning of trite is stale or hackneyed.

But what. "But that" is correct.

A few of the words most frequently confused are:
Ingenious (resourceful) and ingenuous (naïve)
Complacent (smug) and complaisant (willing)
Venal (mercenary) and venial (pardonable)
Visa (passport) and vise (tool)
Staid (sedate) and stayed (past tense of stay)
Mantel (shelf) and mantle (cloak)
Bogey (in golf) and bogy (bugbear)
Forbear (a verb) and forebear (ancestor)
Fiancé (masculine) and fiancée (feminine)

The following points of literary style and diction, quoted from the San Francisco *Chronicle* style book, are sufficiently established to apply to any newspaper:

" Do not write ' over ' 1000 people or ' over ' $1000. Write ' more than ' 1000 people and ' more than ' $1000.

" An aye and no vote, not yeas and nays.

" Don't say a man sustained injuries from which he died. ' Sustain ' means to bear up under or survive, and if a man dies from injuries he naturally has not sustained them. A person ' suffers ' injuries.

" Don't say a man is fatally injured while he is still alive. A person might be dying or expected to die by attending surgeons — but ' fatally injured ' means that the injuries were fatal and the person is dead.

" Don't ' rush ' injured persons to the hospital. Take, convey, or just say they are at the designated hospital.

" Avoid mentioning nationalities, excepting the following: Chinese, Japanese, negroes, Filipinos, Indians, unless it is absolutely essential to the story.

" Do not use the word ' very ' to modify conditions except in quoting some one else or possibly in freak stuff.

" The widow of the dead man, not the ' wife ' of the dead man.

" Don't use 1000 pair — use pairs.

" Mrs. Smith's house is ' on ' Pacific avenue, not ' in.'

" Don't use the ' lone ' bandit, as there is none such. A bandit is a member of a band. Use robber, holdup man, highwayman, or footpad.

" Avoid unnecessary adjectives. Use them moderately and advisedly. Attractive is preferable to pretty; elderly or aged is preferable to old. The more conservative adjective is always preferable. Extreme adjectives give news copy an editorial ring.

" Don't call every broker or real estate man, etc., ' prominent ' or ' well known.' If they are so well known their names and connections are quite sufficient.

" Don't begin a story with a question, such as ' Did John Jones murder his wife? This is the point that a coroner's jury will endeavor to decide today.'

" Don't begin a story with yesterday, last week, tomorrow or today except possibly in freak or feature stories."

Needless to say, the grammatical rules in force on a newspaper are simply the rules of English grammar. Examples of carelessness in print are easy to find, but that does not mean that they were desired. We all know that a predicate should agree with its subject in number, but it is easy to slip, especially when another noun of different number intervenes between subject and predicate or when the subject has a plural significance. " A large number of persons were present " is often encountered, though " A number of persons was present " is correct. Similarly, the writer sometimes forgets that " everybody " takes the pronoun " he," not " they."

The reporter must keep his mind alert to write as well as he knows how if he is never to find himself using " like " for " as," or writing " all organizations were not represented " when he means " not all organizations were represented." The case of the pronoun " who " seems to be

a perpetual stumbling block, and the temptation to introduce a descriptive clause with the words "and who" when previous clauses have not used the "who" form seems almost irresistible, judging from its frequency. Even careful writers have been known to stumble on the "hanging participle." For example, if the sentence beginning paragraph 4 on page 4 of this chapter had opened with the participial form, "By avoiding these expressions," the subject would have had to be "the reporter," not "the story."

It should be abundantly manifest by this time that no style book can take the place of a thorough training in English composition. No one would think of playing a musical instrument in a public concert without having mastered the scales. Our language is the instrument we use in writing, and if we expect to be paid for our performance we owe it to both our readers and our employers to be technically competent. Grammar is not a set of dead mechanical rules; it is simply the way our language works. No one is likely in actual writing to murmur over to himself the precise wording of these rules; following them becomes second nature with practice, and an awkwardly constructed sentence or the misuse of a word jars on the ear like a false note in music. But before any one can trust to "playing the language by ear" he must learn the notes and the fingering of his instrument.

It is also apparent that no newspaper style book can be complete. It is not possible to guess in advance all the mistakes which the careless writer may make. The style book is somewhat like the road signals placed by the automobile associations, which mark the most obvious danger points but do not take the place of individual watchfulness at the wheel. The following style sheet therefore is presented, not as a model, but as an outline which has proved useful in experience. Many items could be added,

and, so far as the typographical sections are concerned, it is merely an example of one form of accepted usage.

HOW TO WRITE CLEARLY

1. In the course of one sentence, change the subject as seldom as possible.

2. Avoid placing in one sentence statements having little connection in thought.

3. Avoid long parenthetical clauses, or a series of modifying clauses between subject and predicate; as,

When Orlando, driven from home by the cruelty of his brother, and Rosalind, disguised as a boy and unknown to her fond lover, met by accident —

4. Keep modifiers of the same construction in the same form. Examples:

I remained a long time *to hear* the orator and *to watch* the audience. Or,

I remained a long time *hearing* the orator and *watching* the audience. (Correct.)

I remained a long time *to hear* the orator and *watching* the audience. (Incorrect.)

5. Place modifiers as near as possible to the words they modify.

(a) The position of an adverb often changes the meaning of a sentence; as,

The banker *lost nearly* his whole fortune.

The banker *nearly lost* his whole fortune.

(b) A phrase incorrectly placed often makes a sentence ambiguous; as, Ida saw a stranger yesterday when she was going to town riding a bicycle. (Who was riding a bicycle?)

(c) Every pronoun should be so placed that its antecedent cannot be mistaken; as,

The melon which we ate was in a basket.

The melon was in a basket, which we ate.

(d) In a sentence mentioning two or more persons, each pronoun should indicate clearly the noun for which it stands; as,

Johnson told Goldsmith that *his* landlady demanded the rent. (Was it Johnson's landlady or Goldsmith's?)

6. Do not mix metaphors.

7. Do not split infinitives. Say, *speedily to prepare,* or *to prepare speedily,* not *to speedily prepare.*

Verbs

1. Singular subjects connected by *and,* when they are modified by *each, every,* and *no* require a singular verb; as,

Every *limb* and every *feature appears* with its respective grace. Singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* require a singular verb; as,

Neither *wealth* nor *honor secures* the happiness of its votaries. If one of the subjects be plural it must be placed next the verb, which must also be in the plural; as,

Neither the *queen* nor her *maids were* happy.

2. When the subject is a collective noun conveying the idea of plurality, the verb should be plural; but when it is a collective noun conveying the idea of unity, the verb should be singular; as,

When *they* are all agreed, the *jury return* to the bar.

The *jury was* to come from the neighborhood of the place where the cause of action was laid.

3. Do not omit the principal verb when the auxiliaries require different forms of the verbs; as,

This opinion never *has prevailed* and never *can prevail;* instead of, This opinion never *has* and never *can* prevail.

4. When a verb whose subject is singular follows closely a plural noun in a modifier, be careful not to be misled into using a plural verb; as,

The father with all the children *was* there; not

The father with all the children *were* there.

5. Avoid hanging participles; such as,

The girl said that after *reiterating* her refusal in Modesto to wed young Lufkin, he consented to bring her home.

The phrase should read, The girl said that after *she refused* in Modesto to wed, or after *she reiterated.*

6. A noun or pronoun used to limit a gerund should have the possessive, not the objective, form:

I heard of *his* translating Caesar. (Correct.)
I heard of *him* translating Caesar. (Incorrect.)

Rules for Reporters

1. Names and addresses must be written correctly.

2. Avoid phrases or references which might reflect on any religion.

In criminal news, do not mention nationalities.

Do not advertise a revolver by giving its name. The caliber may also be omitted.

3. Do not make freak stories of insanity cases.

4. Do not begin more than one story a day with *a, an,* or *the.*

Do not begin a story with the time of occurrence: as, "*Yesterday —*"; or, "*At 5 o'clock this morning —*"

Avoid trite leads, as "*Caught like rats in a trap —*": or "*Never in the history of —*"

"*At a meeting of —*" is a weak lead.

Leads such as, "*The following communication is self-explanatory*" are forbidden. Make your lead give the meaning of the communication.

Do not begin with a general statement; as "*A terrible accident occurred —*" Tell what really happened.

5. Do not hesitate to repeat names wherever needed for clearness. Avoid saying, "*The man was taken to the hospital, where he died.*"

6. Keep the reader's point of view in mind. Write, "He was *taken* to the hospital"; not "He was *brought* to the hospital."

7. Express no opinions in news stories. Avoid editorial expressions; such as, "an *enjoyable* program," "an *interesting* address."

8. Do not use cant phrases; as "local society," "the smart set," "clubman," or "little one" for infant.

9. Do not use contractions; as, "can't" for cannot; "won't" for would not or will not.

10. Do not say a woman is beautiful.

11. Do not say, "He *left* a *wife.*" A woman who survives her husband is a widow.

12. Do not say, "The funeral of the *late* — " Omit "late."

13. Do not use *former* and *latter* (except in titles, as former President Taft).

14. Avoid unnecessary words; as, "They returned *back again* to the city, *from* whence they had come."

15. Do not place unimportant words in prominent positions; as, "The city council *today* — "

16. Do not say, "Among those present were — *and others*." Omit "and others."

17. Do not divide the last word on a page.

18. Do not confuse the words *sewer, sewage, sewerage.* The sewer is the drain, sewage, the filth drained; sewerage, the system of sewers.

Do Not Use

Abolished for *abated.* Nuisances are *abated.*

Above for *foregoing.* Say, the *foregoing* statement.

Admission for *Admittance.* An admission is an acknowledgment.

Aged for *of age.*

Alleged for *suspected* or *accused.* Say, the *alleged crime,* the *accused* or *suspected* person.

Allude for *refer.* Do not *allude* to death or misfortune.

Alright for *all right.*

Amateur for *novice* or *tyro.*

Amount for *quantity.* A *quantity* of liquid.

Antecedents for *history.*

Apt for *liable.* An *apt* pupil, *liable* to arrest, *likely* to err.

As — as, for *so — as.* This volume is not *so* bulky *as* that.

Like for *as.* Do *as* I say, not Do *like* I say.

As though, for *as if.*

At the present time, for *at present,* or *now.*

Avoid for *avert.* Accidents are *averted.* To *avoid* is to elude, to shun.

Backwards for *backward.*

Belongs to, for *is a member of.*

Burglarize. No such word.

Caption for *heading. Caption* is a technical word.

Captivated for *charmed.*

Colored man, or *colored woman* for *negro* or *negress.*

Commence for *begin.*

Completely destroyed for *destroyed.*

Considerable for *large* or *great;* as, He felt *considerable* interest in the work.

Consummate in reports of marriages.

Convene (to come together) for *convoke* (to call together).

Crime and *sin* are not synonymous. *Crime* is a violation of a statute law of a particular country. *Sin* is the violation of a moral law.

Data is for *data are.*

Deceased, decedent. These are legal terms.

Declared for *said* or *asserted.*

Divine for *clergyman* or *priest.*

Dock for *wharf* or *pier.* A common error.

Educational for *educative. Educational* is relating to education. *Educative* is that which educates.

Endorse for *approve.*

Enthuse. No such word.

Event for *occasion.* On this *occasion.*

Exemplary for *excellent.*

Every for *all;* as, He deserved *every praise.*

Farther for *further.* Say, A mile *farther;* nothing *further.*

Fence for *receiver of stolen property.* Thieves' argot.

Folks for *folk.*

Forwards for *forward.*

Funeral of the *late. Late* is unnecessary.

Graduated for *was graduated.*

Gratuitous for *unnecessary. Gratuitous* means without payment.

Great deal for *much, some.*

Healthy for *healthful.* A man is *healthy,* a country or climate *healthful.*

Hon. and *esquire.*

Humanitarian for *philanthropist. Humanitarian* means one who denies the divinity of Christ.

Illy. No such word. *Ill* is both an adjective and an adverb.

Inaugurate for *begin* or *open.*

Interment for *burial.*

Initial for *opening;* as, the *initial* ceremony.

Lady for *woman.*

Laid for *lie.* Say, I *lay* on the grass.

Leaves a widow for *left a widow.*

Learn for *teach.* You can *learn* but I must *teach* you. (Old Grammar.)

Less for *fewer.* *Less* trouble for *fewer* persons.

Lengthy for *long* or *voluminous.*

Like for *as.*

Loan as a *verb.* (The verb is *to lend.*)

Locate for *settle* or *place.* Missing persons are *found,* not *located.*

Made his escape for *escaped.*

Married for *was married.* The woman is always *married* to the man. The minister *marries* them.

Merchant for *shopkeeper.*

Murderous for *deadly* or *dangerous.*

Necessities for *necessaries.* The *necessaries* of life are food and shelter.

Next to for *next.* An adverb should be placed *next* the word it modifies.

None are for *none is.*

Obnoxious for *offensive.* *Obnoxious* means harmful.

Obsequies for *funeral.* Do not say funeral *services.*

Observe for *say.*

Officer for *policeman* or *patrolman.*

Old for *aged.* An *old* house, but an *aged* person.

Older or *oldest* for *elder* or *eldest.* An *older* house, an *elder* man and *eldest* son.

Ones. Two *ones?*

One of the most unique for *unique.* (Unique has no degrees.)

Other two for *two others.*

Pair for *couple.* Do not speak of a man and woman as a *pair.*

Partial for *incomplete.* Say, a *partial* teacher, *incomplete* election returns.

Partially for *partly.*

Parties or *party* for *persons* (except legal cases).

Patrons for *customers.*

People for *persons.* Say, the *people* rule. Twelve *persons* were present.

Plans were *made* or *laid* for *plans* were *formulated.*

Plead guilty for *pleaded guilty.*

Posted for *informed.*

Practically for *virtually* or *practicably. Practical* is opposed to theoretical. Speak of *practicable* things, a *practical* man. A work may be *virtually* complete.

Presented with — Say, A gold-headed cane was *presented to him.*

Presided at the piano for *played the piano.*

Propose for *purpose.*

Proven for *proved.*

Put in an appearance for *appear.*

Quit for *quitted.*

Quite a number or *a number of,* for *several.*

Refer back for *refer.*

Region for *neighborhood.*

Reliable for *trustworthy.*

Religious for *pious.*

Remains for *corpse* or *body.*

Reside for *live.*

Resolution was *passed* for resolution was *adopted.*

Retire for *go to bed.*

Ruination. Not sanctioned by Webster.

Sabbath for *Sunday.*

Section for *region* or *neighborhood.*

Secure for *obtain* or *procure.* To *secure* means to make fast.

Social dance for *dance.*

Spend for *pass.* We *spend* money, but *pass* time.

Standpoint for *point of view.*

State for *say.*

Stopping for *staying*. A guest *stays* at a hotel.

Sustain for *incur*. A man *sustains* an injury only if he recovers.

Tasty for *tasteful*.

The *then* governor — . Say, the governor *at that time*.

These sort or *these kind* for *this sort, this kind*. Say, *This kind* of book; not, *This kind* of a book.

Thud. "Dull thud" is forbidden.

Took place for *happened* or *occurred*. Weddings *take place;* meetings *are held*. Accidents *occur* or *happen*. Things happen or occur by chance; they are held or take place by arrangement.

To the value of for *of the value of* or *valued at*.

Towards for *toward*.

Transpire for *occur*. To *transpire* is to become known.

Try and get for *try to get*, etc.

Try an experiment for *make an experiment*. An experiment is a trial.

Ult., Inst., or *Prox.*, for *last month, this month, next month*.

United in marriage for *were married*.

Unwell for *sick* or *ill*.

Ventilate for *expose* or *explain*.

Verbal for *oral*. A statement spoken is *oral*.

Vicinity for *neighborhood*. The word vicinity should always be preceded by *its;* as, Oakland and *its vicinity*.

Viewpoint for *point of view*.

Wet for *wetted*. I saw him *wet* his lips. He *wetted* his lips.

Whereabouts is for *whereabouts are*.

Whether for *if*. The word *whether* cannot stand alone — say, *whether or not*.

Do not mix languages, as in *per day, per year*. Say *per diem, per annum*. The English forms, *a year, a day*, are preferred.

Although newspaper proof is read and corrected by professional proofreaders in the composing room, the reporter may often be called upon to make corrections in proof of his own stories. To be a good proofreader, in fact, is almost as necessary a part of the equipment of any professional

writer as to be able to use a typewriter. Proofreading requires an accurate eye for detail — in reading for sense the eye takes in words, phrases and even sentences at a glance, but in proofreading the eye must rapidly and consciously scan each individual letter. In addition, it is necessary to understand and to be able to use the special symbols by which proof is marked.

EXERCISES

1. Compare issues of two different papers and note specific differences in the style used for capitals, street addresses, titles of address, etc.

2. Look for examples of bromidic expressions in your newspaper; no paper is perfect, and you will doubtless find some.

3. Do you find in your newspaper any examples of the grammatical errors noted in the foregoing chapter?

4. What would be the advantages and the disadvantages of a uniform style book for all papers?

5. What would be the difficulty of making one which would be universally accepted?

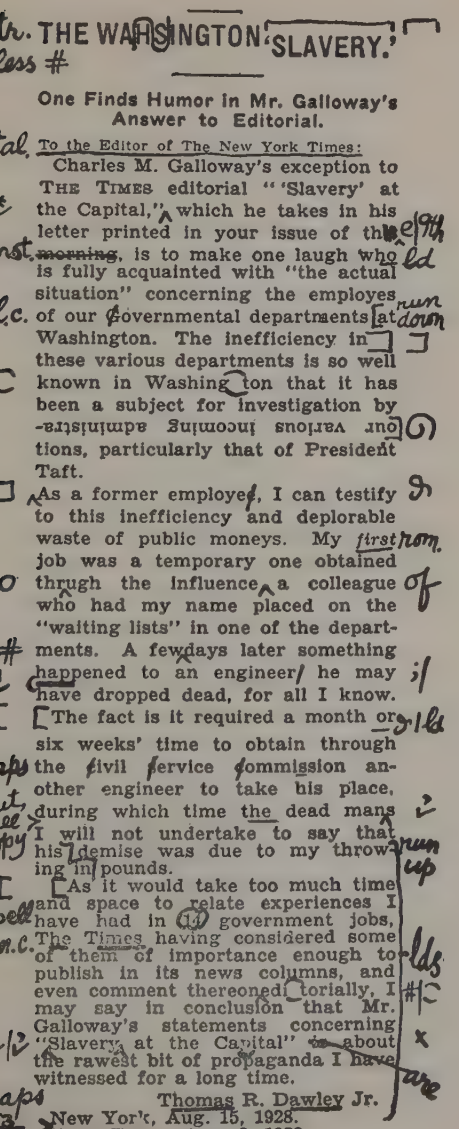
6. What general differences in the ruling on disputed points would you expect to find between the Oxford Dictionary and the Standard Dictionary? Which dictionary would be a better guide to adopt in deciding on the style book for your student paper? Why?

7. Are you yourself in the habit of making any of the mistakes listed in the text? Were any of the corrections new to you?

PROOFREADERS' MARKS

∧	Make correction indicated in margin.
stet	Retain crossed-out word or letter; let it stand.
....	Retain words under which dots appear; write "Stet" in margin.
stet	
×	Appears battered; examine.
≡	Straighten lines.
vvv	Unevenly spaced; correct spacing.
//	Line up; i.e., make lines even with other matter.
run in	Make no break in the reading, no ¶
no ¶	No paragraph; sometimes written "run in."
out see copy	Here is an omission; see copy.
¶	Make a paragraph here.
tr	Transpose words or letters as indicated.
⌐	Take out matter indicated; dele.
⌐	Take out character indicated and close up.
℄	Line drawn through a cap means lower case.
⅁	Upside down; reverse.
⁀	Close up; no space.
#	Insert a space here.
⊥	Push down this space.
⊏	Indent line one em.
⊏	Move this to the left.
⊐	Move this to the right.
⌐¬	Raise to proper position.
⌊⌋	Lower to proper position.
////	Hair space letters.
W.f.	Wrong font; change to proper font.
Qu?	Is this right?
l.c.	Put in lower case (small letters).
s.c.	Put in small capitals.
caps	Put in capitals.
C.&S.C.	Put in caps and small caps.
rom.	Change to Roman.
ital.	Change to Italic.
≡	Under letter or word means caps.
=	Under letter or word, small caps.
—	Under letter or word means Italic.
~	Under letter or word, bold face.
,/	Insert comma.
;/	Insert semicolon.
:/	Insert colon.
⊙	Insert period.
/?/	Insert interrogation mark.
(!)	Insert exclamation mark.
/=/	Insert hyphen.
✓	Insert apostrophe.
✓✓	Insert quotation marks.
✓	Insert superior letter or figure.
∧	Insert inferior letter or figure.
[/]	Insert brackets.
(/)	Insert parenthesis.
1/m	One-em dash.
2/m	Two-em parallel dash.

PROOF CORRECTIONS


THE WASHINGTON 'SLAVERY.'
One Finds Humor in Mr. Galloway's Answer to Editorial.
To the Editor of The New York Times:
Charles M. Galloway's exception to THE TIMES editorial "'Slavery' at the Capital," which he takes in his letter printed in your issue of this morning, is to make one laugh who is fully acquainted with "the actual situation" concerning the employes of our governmental departments at Washington. The inefficiency in these various departments is so well known in Washington that it has been a subject for investigation by our various incoming administrations, particularly that of President Taft.
As a former employe, I can testify to this inefficiency and deplorable waste of public moneys. My first job was a temporary one obtained thrugh the influence a colleague who had my name placed on the "waiting lists" in one of the departments. A few days later something happened to an engineer; he may have dropped dead, for all I know.
The fact is it required a month or six weeks' time to obtain through the civil service commission another engineer to take his place, during which time the dead man's I will not undertake to say that his demise was due to my throwing in pounds.
As it would take too much time and space to relate experiences I have had in the government jobs, The Times having considered some of them of importance enough to publish in its news columns, and even comment thereon editorially, I may say in conclusion that Mr. Galloway's statements concerning "Slavery at the Capital" is about the rawest bit of propaganda I have witnessed for a long time.
Thomas R. Dawley Jr.
New York, Aug. 15, 1928.
THE TIMES, Aug. 9, 1928.

XX

NEWSPAPER TRAINING

Every occupation except unskilled labor requires some preparation. The student who has read thus far in this book is not likely to share the somewhat wide-spread delusion that the only requirement for newspaper work is the desire to engage in it. Yet newspaper offices are besieged daily by applicants indifferently educated and without experience, who think it would be pleasant to be a reporter for a change. No one would think of applying for a position as a professional musician in a symphony orchestra merely because he liked to listen to music over the radio; and yet, because language is a universal tool, many overlook the fact that to be able to read and write does not imply sufficient skill to write what others are willing to pay to read.

Under modern conditions newspaper work is a highly skilled occupation for which preliminary training is essential. That training may be of three types: general education, specific education, and the "school of experience." Of these three, the last is the roughest road and has the most limited opportunities for advancement. The bright office boy who works his way up to the editor's desk is a very nearly extinct specimen. If he is really a bright office boy, he will soon realize that the way ahead is blocked a very short distance from its starting point unless he goes back for the education he has missed. In fact, if he shows promise, his editor will almost invariably urge him to stop work and go back to school.

A high school education is no longer sufficient as a general background for a newspaper career. A representative attitude is that of an editor who said: "With an unlimited number of college graduates eager for jobs and willing to work at the same salary, why should I accept applicants who have only a high school education?" Of course for some it is financially impossible to go to college directly from high school, and of these a certain number will be given a trial at a newspaper job. However, they will not only find that they are at an initial disadvantage in competition with college-trained men and women, but they will be urged to find a way to continue their education if they expect to remain permanently in the field.

The advantage of a general college education versus a specific course in journalism is not a subject for real comparison. The two are supplementary, not antagonistic. If it were possible to choose between the preparation given by a course in journalism and nothing else, and a well-rounded college education which did not include a course in journalism, no editor would hesitate to advise the latter. But the question is purely academic. No one sufficiently interested in newspaper work to take a course in journalism can fail to realize the necessity for supplementary courses.

The newspaper writer must meet men of many professions on their own ground. Just as the sports writer cannot give a play-by-play account of a football game without knowing something about football, so the reporter must have at least a general survey knowledge of a variety of subjects on which he may have to write. If he has a specialized knowledge of one or more of them, so much the better. Not only is it impossible to write an intelligent story on a subject of which he is wholly ignorant, but it is impossible to write even an accurate one, for nothing is more likely to result in misconstruction and garbling of

facts than a mere parroting of uncomprehended statements. One has only to listen to a sentence spoken in an unfamiliar language and attempt to repeat the sound, heard, to realize how important a part an understanding of meaning plays in the ability even to repeat exactly what is said. Needless to say, when, as in the newspaper story, verbatim repetition is supplanted by condensation, explanation, and paraphrase, ignorance of the meaning of the ideas expressed is a severe handicap.

Among the most useful " background subjects " for newspaper training are English, history, economics, sociology, general science, and psychology. To these should be added at least a bowing acquaintance with law. Aside from the actual information acquired, college training may be expected to equip the student to fill in the gaps of knowledge for himself. One of the main values of education is that it gives the student a technic of learning and thus enables him to get needed information on any subject with a minimum expenditure of time and effort. Thus, if the reporter who has been unable to include a course in law finds himself assigned to the court-house beat, he will take every advantage of his opportunity to watch the procedure of the courts and will be equipped to do outside reading in the subject with intelligent interest.

Courses in journalism at first met with a somewhat less than tepid reception by newspaper editors, partly because every innovation has to win its way and partly because the city editor eyed askance the young graduate of a journalism course who rested under the cheerful delusion that he knew everything that was to be known and was ready to teach the editor how the paper should be run. Precisely the same criticism, of course, has long been leveled at the young college graduate in any other vocation.

There is no logical reason why definite preliminary train-

ing should not be as advantageous to newspaper work as to engineering or law. Just as the old practice of training for a career in law by serving as an apprentice in some lawyer's office has given place to a course of study in a law school, so it is only reasonable to expect that the time will come when reporters will be expected to have received specific training in a school of journalism. Such training is no substitute for experience; the young graduate holds just about the same position in the world of practical newspaper work as the young man who has just passed his bar examinations holds in the practice of law. He is ready to begin, that is all.

Although many editors still maintain that six months of working experience is worth more than a whole course in journalism, the person with specific training is likely to advance much farther in those six months than the person without it. If he uses what he has learned without imagining that he knows it all before he begins, he is in a position to profit by the lessons of experience more quickly and, given initial aptitude, to find that some preliminary spadework on the road to competence has been done.

The original skepticism of editors as to the value of specific training in journalism has all but vanished and given place to an attitude of willing co-operation. W. P. Beazell, assistant managing editor of the New York *World*, has expressed the opinion that " a good school of journalism does qualify a man with background, does give him a feeling of responsibility, does co-ordinate all these things in him so that in half the time, or a quarter of the time, he has adapted himself to the practice which is the thing that produces newspapers."

That specific training is of practical use is shown by statistics of a single institution, the department of industrial journalism of the Kansas State College. This depart-

ment established a four-year course in 1910. Answers to a questionnaire sent out in 1928 show that seventy-eight per cent of the male graduates are practicing newspaper men; the percentage is reduced to fifty-eight if women are included. Several hundred students who were not graduated are not included in the list.

Out of 105 graduates, five were newspaper editorial writers; two were engaged in editorial work for syndicates; nine in editorial work for magazines; seven were reporters; twelve were employed in newspaper advertising; eight in publicity; one in printing; two in publishing; five in teaching journalism; two were engaged in further advanced study; fifteen were housewives and thirty-eight were following other non-journalistic occupations.

The same report showed an interesting comparison of salaries. The average salary of the reporter at twenty-five years is listed as $1300 a year; at thirty-five years, $2500, and at forty-five years, $3000. Five years after completing the college journalism course, the average salary of graduates between twenty-five and thirty years of age was $2481, and ten years after graduation, the average salary was $4000.

Editors are showing an increasing appreciation of the value of special courses of training by giving opportunities for students to obtain some practical experience before they are ready to seek full time jobs. Such examples are numerous. Students of the course of journalism at Washington University are assigned in rotation to spend a portion of each day for four weeks on the St. Louis *Globe Democrat*. The Asbury Park (New Jersey) *Press* has a weekly page on school affairs edited by selected groups of high school students, who hold weekly conferences with the managing editor. Two pupils are appointed from each school in Columbus, Ohio, to report school news for the weekly school section

of the Columbus *Citizen*. The editor of the section, incidentally, is a product of the Ohio State University school of journalism, and he records that the student-reporter system has frequently brought front page stories into the *Citizen* office. Although no editor likes to hire reporters whose term of employment is known in advance to be temporary, many newspapers have co-operated with departments of journalism by giving members of the class employment during summer vacations. All these, and other similar experiments, show that the modern newspaper editor realizes the advantage of special training and is willing to give those seeking it the aid of actual laboratory experience.

A novel suggestion to raise the standards of training for newspaper work has been set forth by the Illinois Press Association, which collected from newspaper editors a list of questions for an "examination in practical journalism," with the idea of establishing standards of ability for reporters similar to those established by the state bar association for lawyers. Candidates who pass the examination are given a "certificate of professional standing in journalism."

The first examination was held at the University of Illinois in May, 1929. Two classes of applicants are eligible for the examination: first, those holding a B.A. degree with one year's practical experience; second, high school graduates with five years' practical experience. The examination itself is divided into three parts: general reading, theory, and practice. It is the intention to offer examinations after working hours to the staff in any newspaper office when six or more reporters ask for it.

The following questions are among those presented by Ashley Green of the Chicago *Journal* for this examination. The student may find it an interesting experiment to answer

them, and later to turn to the answers given by the city editor of a metropolitan paper to whom they were put.

1. Two men and a woman, who make their living fishing in Lake Michigan, set out in a forty-two foot cabin cruiser from Waukegan and are caught in a storm. Three days later the boat heads into the harbor at South Chicago with the three members of the crew safe aboard. Why is that a good story?

2. A reporter has certain information supporting a charge that a public official has been using city labor and equipment in building his house. What should he do about it?

3. Suppose the public official should begin by saying: "Well, this is off the record and not for publication," and then confess the charge is true, what should the reporter do?

4. Is there ever an occasion when a reporter is justified in breaking a confidence?

5. Suppose a reporter gets an exclusive story that a $100,000 damage suit has been decided against his newspaper's biggest advertiser and the records have been suppressed; furthermore, the lawyer from whom he gets the details offers to wager that the story will not be published; what should the reporter do?

6. Suppose the story is not published, what should the reporter do?

7. What should a reporter do if he is offered $100 by some manufacturer to write a story about some phase of his factory which has news or feature interest?

8. If a reporter is instructed to get a picture of some one and after his request for one is denied he sees one on the wall of the person's house which he can take, should he take it?

9. If a reporter, after a story is published, learns that he has been misinformed and that the story is inaccurate or a falsehood, what should he do about it?

The city editor's answers were as follows. (Do not read them until you have answered the questions yourself, then compare the results):

1. "Because it would give good pictures and has an adventure element in the conflict between man and nature."

2. "Inform the city editor immediately and obtain instructions; do not go to the official direct."

3. "Do not accept such conditions. Convince the official that the facts will be published and that for his own sake he had better make a truthful statement."

4. "The reporter should avoid confidences that entail the responsibility of suppressing news in which the public is vitally concerned. Aside from his duty as a reporter, it is his duty as a citizen not to connive at the protection of a lawbreaker."

5. "Unless it is necessary in order to obtain the story, a reporter should not bet as to the outcome; nor should he doubt for a moment the policy of his paper to publish all the news. Whether or not the story is actually suppressed depends on the ethics of the owner."

6. "News should not be suppressed. The reporter may well resign, preferring not to work on a dishonest sheet. On the other hand, his actual responsibility ends with securing the story. What is done with it by the editor or owner is not, strictly speaking, his concern."

7. "He should explain diplomatically that the manufacturer has made a mistake in thinking that a newspaper man can be subsidized. He should refuse the money but not suppress the news."

8. "If he wants to keep his job, he should take the picture. If he wants to keep his conscience clear — well, the act would not be considered thievery by most reporters. The reporter who both wants to keep his job and has a

sensitive conscience is the type that will work hardest to overcome opposition and obtain permission for the picture."

9. "He should immediately take steps to get the true story and should present the facts correcting the false statement."

W. J. Smith, former president of the Illinois Press Association, submitted these questions, among others, for the examination:

1. If you had charge of laying out the front page of a paper, and a man of the prominence of Rockefeller or Ford should have died and in the same edition you carried a story about a triple murder in your community, to which news article would you give preference in the matter of position? Why?

2. Should newspapers make it a practice to print on Monday texts of one or more local Sunday sermons? Why?

3. Do you think newspapers should exact pay for printing cards of thanks following deaths? Why?

4. Should political advertising be charged at a higher rate than regular local advertising? Why?

5. Which department of a newspaper is more remunerative, the business or editorial — that is, in matter of salary paid to employees? Why?

6. Should an employee of a newspaper working in the advertising department cultivate the habit of picking up news for his paper or should the two departments operate entirely separately?

The managing editor of a metropolitan newspaper answered these questions as follows:

1. "Rockefeller or Ford would be given the preferred position — page one, column eight. Both are characters whose news value has been built up by achievement and publicity until their names are household words — witness the fact that their last names were used as sufficient identi-

fication in the question. The death of either would have greater news significance than a local murder because of its national, financial, and industrial effect."

2. "Yes; because of circulation among church followers, who will buy the paper that prints such items."

3. "Yes; because such items are not of general news interest."

4. "Short term advertising is charged at a higher rate. On some papers political advertising is classed with theater advertising, carrying some news publicity, and therefore is charged at a higher rate."

5. "Business; because to the activities of this department the owner more readily traces the dollars and cents of income."

6. "The advertising employee should freely tip the editorial department to news but should make no attempt to exert any influence in determining what shall go into the news columns."

Orville Davis, former owner of the Champaign (Illinois) *News* submitted the following questions:

1. In reporting, what course would you pursue in instances where you were asked by the public to suppress news stories?

2. You are given a valuable news story. Your informant seeks the pledge that you will not divulge the source of your information. How will you answer him?

To these questions an experienced editor gave the following answers:

1. "The 'public' does not make such a request; it could be made only by a certain member of the public, or by a representative of one section of the public. The entire public is never agreed as to what it wants to have printed or suppressed. The answer depends on how large a section of the public is concerned, and whether, even if the majority

desire suppression, the story is one which, on grounds of principle, the editor believes should be printed. Minorities should not be allowed to dictate news policy. The editor's decision is final as to what is news and what should be printed. If he makes the wrong decision too often, his paper will suffer, but so long as he holds his position he should not submit to outside dictation from the public or any one else. In no case is it within the province of the reporter to decide whether news should be printed or suppressed."

2. "Tell your city editor, analyzing as carefully as you can the motives of your informant, but protect him if you have promised to do so. The suppression of the source of information is on a different plane from the suppression of the information itself."

C. E. Warwick, business manager of the Canton (Illinois) *Daily Ledger,* propounded the significant question: "What should be taken into consideration in determining the dividing line between the rights of the general public and the private interests of the publisher as concerns the conduct of a newspaper?"

The only right of the general public is obedience to the laws, to which the public is entitled from the newspaper as from every other business enterprise or individual. All other questions which might arise are considerations of policy, expediency, and taste. The publisher is dependent on the support of the public for the success of his newspaper. If the public does not like the newspaper in sufficient numbers to make publication profitable, the newspaper will fail. It is not a question of right versus interests, but of an adjustment between the interests of the publisher and the interests of the buying public. The public holds the whip hand, not by moral right but by power.

The answer given this question by the owner of a large

and successful newspaper consisted of the one word: "Bankruptcy."

In newspaper work, as in most other pursuits, the first steps are the hardest. But every special correspondent with a national reputation was a cub before he became a star. It is hard for the eager and ambitious beginner who feels capable of writing editorials, features, and page one news stories to be set to copying the vital statistics or taking rewrite of trivial police court cases. But it is necessary.

A position on a metropolitan newspaper is seldom open to an inexperienced man or woman. The best opening for the beginner is on a small town paper (which provides invaluable Jack-of-all-trades experience); as country correspondent for a larger paper; or, while he is still a student, as campus correspondent for a paper in the town. If he shows ability, faithfulness, and initiative in any of these capacities, he will find himself considered for an opening in the "main office." If he falls down on the job because he considers it unworthy of his best efforts, he will find that he is not so unnoticed as he thought he was, when he applies for a better job.

The most vital question of all to the student remains: Is newspaper work worth while as a vocation? It is a firm tradition in newspaper offices that the reporter should heap scorn upon his occupation, declaring that he does not see why any one should lead such a dog's life, that he would advise against it any one whose interests he had at heart, and that he does not see why he stays at it except that there is no other way for him to obtain a weekly pay envelope. It is also a tradition that the real newspaper man may tear himself loose from the local room, beckoned by larger earnings, but that the virus is in his blood, making him never quite content in any other walk of life.

Marlen Pew, present editor of *Editor and Publisher* and

active newspaper man since 1894, out of his ripe experience has this to say to the aspiring " cub " :

" I'm asking you, lad, what will money buy? Will it buy the thrill a reporter gets from a two-edition beat on a story good enough for the wires? Will it buy the joy of writing a piece that will set by the ears the whole town, state, or indeed the nation? Will money give you entrée into any circle of society, high or low, making you understand from actual contact what makes society tick and the whole world move on? Can you buy the privilege of spoofing the bluffs of the audacious mighty and debunking the demagogue? Newspaper men are on to life through actual experience as are no other class of workers. They have moments of real exultation. Also to them humor is real. They temper the winds for the shorn lambs. They feed an element of romance to millions of starved souls. They teach the real lessons of life. Their day and night vigilance protects the modern city a thousand times more efficiently than did the great walls of ancient civilizations that lived in dread of the ravages of savage and plundering hordes. They carry the flag of progress and reform, without the pretense of the professional leader or reformer. They are the sworn enemies of injustice, corruption, tyranny, hypocrisy, and exploitation. They serve all men on equal terms. Independence is their heritage. They may be gentlemen. They live in the spirit, but with feet on the ground. No day is dull. In old age they are comforted by ten thousand happy and exciting memories. Will money buy these things? "

In this connection it is pertinent to quote the words of Percy Hammond, dramatic critic of the New York *Herald-Tribune*, after thirty-five years of active newspaper work:

" It's a great game. I'd do it all over again. To get ahead in newspaper work, as in anything else, one must

have both ability and a modicum of luck. Within limits one can get whatever he wants if he wants it enough. A man should aim at specializing after his first few years on a paper. He should follow his natural inclination as to what his specialty will be. A newspaper job offers more opportunities than other lines of work. It's a swell racket!"

Advancement in this, as in any other occupation, lies, as Hammond says, in specialization. The line of that specialization will of course depend upon individual aptitude. Within the newspaper itself are opportunities to work up to executive positions, such as city editor or managing editor; or to eminence in the field of criticism; or to the place of "star" or special correspondent. The successful columnist may have his work distributed widely and profitably by one of the syndicates. The reporter may also branch out into advertising or publicity writing. The number of playwrights, novelists, and essayists who are or have been newspaper men and women bears witness to the value of newspaper work, with its manifold contacts with human nature and human conduct, to the imaginative writer.

There are advantages and disadvantages to newspaper work as to every other occupation. In considering these, the temperament of the individual must be taken into consideration. The introvert who shrinks from harsh contact with the external world and who is not vitally interested in other people is unfitted for reporting. The person who is happy only in an orderly routine, in which the days and hours can be allotted in advance, will not like the uncertain hours, the absolute requirement that the good newspaper man should forget meals, sleep, engagements, the eight hour law, and everything else in pursuit of a story for its own sake. The blasé or the supercilious person, to whom the

doings of his fellows fail to present a spectacle of ever fresh interest, will be both a failure and unhappy in a newspaper job.

Newspaper writing is ephemeral in its nature — it is lost and forgotten almost as soon as it is done. So is most other work. All that it gives is a store of memories, and fun in the doing, and an enrichment of personal experience. That is the best that any work can give. Newspaper work, like every other occupation, is first of all a way of living, since most of us spend the majority of our waking hours during our adult lives in the vocation we have chosen. As a way of living, the newspaper man's vocation offers first of all variety, an escape from the routine which is as distasteful to some as it is desired by others. It enlarges the range of contacts and sympathies. It inculcates that wide tolerance which views the murderer and the magnate primarily as human beings. If, as some one has said, " a newspaper is a liberal education, over our neighbor's shoulder " to the reader, it is a still more liberal education to the man or woman who gathers and writes what is in the paper. It encourages a sensitive and alert observation which in turn leads to a sympathetic understanding of human character and behavior even when both character and behavior are alien to those of the observer.

Two paragraphs written by the novelist Joseph Conrad, in which he is speaking, not of newspaper reporting, but of the highest form of the novelist's art as he sees it, may be applied without modification to the task of the writer for the press:

" My task," says Conrad, " is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel — it is, before all, to make you see. That, and no more — and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm — all you demand

— and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask."

Again, the reporter's attitude toward the world about him is primarily that of the same novelist, who maintains that the universe should be viewed as "purely spectacular: a spectacle for awe, love, adoration, or hate, if you like, but in this view — and in this view alone — never for despair! . . . And the unwearied self-forgetful attention to every phase of the living universe reflected in our consciousness may be our appointed task on earth. A task in which fate has perhaps engaged nothing of us except our conscience, gifted with a voice in order to bear true testimony to the visible wonder, the haunting terror, the infinite passion, and the illimitable serenity; to the supreme law and the abiding mystery of the sublime spectacle."

The reporter who responds to this vision of the world as a spectacle — sublime and terrible and absurd — and who asks no further mission than "to make you hear, to make you feel, to make you see" will find in his work an unwearied zest — and he will belong to the fellowship of the craft. May he go forth and prosper!

EXERCISES

1. What courses besides this one are you taking which you think might be of help to you in newspaper work. In what respects?

2. The general college courses listed as useful for background were suggested by active newspaper editors. What reasons, do you think, governed their recommendations?

3. Have you applied anything learned in this course to any of your other courses requiring writing? With what result?

4. Have you any idea, as yet, in what branch of newspaper work you would like to specialize? If so, what motive governs your choice?

5. Without referring to the earlier exercise, analyze your reasons for thinking you would like newspaper work and your qualifications for it. Then compare this analysis with the answer you gave to the same question in the exercise on Chapter I.

6. The remark was once made to a newspaper writer, "I should think you would hate your work — it brings you into contact with so many unpleasant people!" The answer was: "But that is one reason why I like it!" What does this answer indicate as to the character and qualifications of the writer in question?

7. What is your immediate reaction to persons whose moral or religious attitudes, manners, dress, or customs differ markedly from your own? How would newspaper work tend to modify or reinforce this reaction?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Periodical

Editor and Publisher (weekly) New York. (If the class can club together for a subscription to this journal, it will possess an invaluable current commentary on the contemporary press.)

Fiction

Success, by Samuel Hopkins Adams
Street of Adventure, by Philip Gibbs
Caliban, by W. L. George
Alias Ben Alibi, by Irvin S. Cobb
A Hind Let Loose, by C. E. Montague
The Stolen Story, by Jesse L. Williams
The Derelict, by Richard Harding Davis
High Ground, by Jonathan Brooks
Rutledge Rides Alone, by Will Levington Comfort
Splendor, by Ben Ames Williams

Biography and Reminiscences

Through Thirty Years, by Wickham Stead
Changes and Chances (3 vols.) by H. W. Nevinson
Adventures and Letters, by Richard Harding Davis
Twice Thirty, by Edward W. Bok
When James Gordon Bennett was Caliph of Bagdad, by A. S. Crockett
Trials and Tribulations of an Editor, by L. Frank Tooker
Life and Letters of Walter H. Page
Adventures in Journalism, by Philip Gibbs
Adventures in Interviewing, by Isaac F. Marcosson
Hearst, an American Phenomenon, by John K. Winkler
Joseph Pulitzer, by Don Seitz

Some Newspapers and Newspaper Men, by Oswald Garrison Villard

Source Material

One Day. The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin (one day's issue of a newspaper printed in book form).

Dramatic Opinions and Essays, by George Bernard Shaw (newspaper reviews dating back as far as 1894 and as good reading as ever).

General

The Working Press, by John H. Sorrells

History of American Journalism, by James Melvin Lee

News Ethics, by James Melvin Lee

Newspaper Writing and Editing, by W. G. Bleyer

The Ethics of Journalism, by Nelson Antrim Crawford

Ballyhoo, by Silas Bent

Chats on Feature Writing, by Harry Franklin Harrington

The Young Man and Journalism, by Chester S. Ford

Women in Journalism, by Genevieve Jackson Boughner

The History of Co-operative News-Gathering, by Victor Rosewater

The Country Newspaper and Its Operation, by H. C. Safely

The Story of the "Sun," by Frank M. O'Brien

Newspaper Make-Up and Headlines, by Norman J. Radder

Public Opinion, by Walter Lippmann

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